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Editorial

Four years ago *Screen* established a network of Foreign Editors, in order to increase our contact with readers and especially potential contributors abroad. We also set up a board of Associate Editors in this country, in order to extend the range of expertise of the Editorial Board, and to provide a regular flow of response from readers of the magazine. Neither Foreign Editors nor Associate Editors now seem appropriate ways of fulfilling these functions. Thanks in part to our Foreign Editors' efforts, *Screen* is widely enough known abroad no longer to need intermediaries between its contributors and the Editorial Board, and the Associate Editors themselves, as they explain in the statement below, feel their role is better served by *Screen's* Readers' Meetings. The Editorial Board has therefore decided to discontinue both Foreign and Associate Editor status. We would also like to thank our Foreign and Associate Editors for the work they have done on *Screen's* behalf, and look forward to further collaboration with them on an informal basis.

The Editorial in the last number of *Screen* noted the dangers of the tendency to adopt the Russian-Formalist/Prague-Structuralist definition of the aesthetic function and its effects of 'making strange' and 'foregrounding' as a criterion of value in judging films. The articles in this number take up the same point. These dangers are two-fold. On the one hand this tendency can lead to an overestimation of the radicalness of works which strongly exhibit the 'deconstruction' of the reigning codes. Boileau, advocate if ever there was one of a stable system of codes, noted that 'the stormy style of the ode sometimes takes an accidental path; the beautiful disharmony is here a means to an artistic effect', and Mukařovský commented: 'By a paradoxical turn, the unstructured aesthetic [ie that of foregrounding] thus becomes part of the canon of genres of classical poetry itself.' 'Deconstruction' and 'code' are not incompatibles – on the contrary, as Stephen Heath argues in 'Narrative Space', genres are precisely 'specific instances of equilibrium' between transgression and canon, canonic systematisa-

6 tions of deconstruction. In his article Mark Nash argues that *Vampyr*, recently proposed as a crucial film deconstructing specific and non-specific cinematic codes, can be seen precisely in these deconstructions as an instance of a genre well-known in literature if rare in the cinema, and that the cinematic rarity is itself contained by the location of the film through the foregrounding of its 'author' in the institution of the art cinema. On the other hand, and inversely, this tendency is too quick to dismiss works where it sees undeconstructed codes at work. It forgets that all films offered by the film industries for the spectator's pleasure are like the *fort da* game: they rehearse the unpleasurable loss of object and position for the sake of the renewed pleasure of their eventual restoration, and yet, inextricably bound up in this pleasure there is a direct expression of the death drive, a rehearsal of the loss for its own sake. It is the second of these moments of pleasure (or rather its relation to the first in a particular viewing of a particular film) that, rather than confirming the spectator in his or her position vis-à-vis a new object, produces the separation allowing a knowledge of the object and a transformation of position. In his article in this number, Stephen Heath examines these two types of pleasure vis-à-vis the cinematic codes that preoccupied the articles on Ozu in the last number, those of filmic space in relation to narrative. Colin MacCabe in his article critically re-examines the theses he put forward in *Screen* v 15 n 2 in the light of this distinction, arguing that it is impossible to draw up a typology of texts on internal criteria alone – rather, it is the social moment of a text's production and reception, of its producers and receivers, that will determine the identifications and separations it can produce, and hence its theoretical and political interest.

BEN BREWSTER

Statement

At a meeting of the Associate Editorial Board of *Screen*, those of us who attended felt that the Associate Editorial status no longer served any useful purpose and should be discontinued. The original feedback function of the group will be taken over and given a broader basis by the meetings which the *Screen* Editorial Board will be holding with its readers. We welcome this development and feel that it will constitute a most useful form of discussion. We believe it is indispensable that *Screen* should continue to remain open to constructive criticism and that such meetings should be established on a regular basis.

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Theory and Film: Principles of Realism and Pleasure*

Colin MacCabe

Introduction

Film theory has undergone an extraordinary expansion and mutation in the last few years. Without wishing to specify either their relative importance or their interdependence, one could indicate three factors which have contributed to this growth: increasingly heterogeneous developments within filmic practice; an enlarged educational investment; and a growing concern with the general theoretical problems of signification. The result of these complex determinants is that, while developing its own specific area of analysis, film theory has come in recent years to have more and more to contribute to many of the most important and central cultural debates. *Screen* has participated actively in this process and it is through a consideration of one crucial area of discussion namely realism, that we can attempt to understand the impetus and direction of *Screen's* work in the recent past. Brecht remarked that realism was not simply a matter for aesthetic debate but was one of the crucial questions of our age.¹ The problems of realism occur in an acute and critical form in the cinema and perhaps no

* This article originated in a paper written for a SEFT Weekend on Realism and the Cinema. The films planned for screening at that School were *American Graffiti*, as an example of a Hollywood-made film in the modern, more 'realistic' style, *The Lump*, as an example of the use of fictionalised documentary for political ends within the mass media, and *Death by Hanging* as an example of a film which while superficially 'non-realist' can lay claim to inclusion within Brecht's definitions of realism. These three films accordingly constitute the main sources of examples in this article.

1. 'Realism is an issue not only for literature: it is a major political, philosophical and practical issue and must be handled and explained as such.' Bertolt Brecht: 'Against George Lukács,' *New Left Review* n 84, March-April 1974, p 45.

8 single topic concentrates so many of the developments that have taken place in film theory.

If we say that realism is, and has been, the dominant aesthetic in film, it is important to realise that this dominance does not date from film's inception. At the moment of its invention, various possibilities remained open to film; possibilities which were closed down by a set of ideological choices, and the manner of this closure is of great interest to the study of ideology.² But if we recognise the extent to which realism became dominant in film only after the development of sound, and after film production throughout the world had been hegemonised in Hollywood, it is still the case that realism has been the dominant aesthetic since the Second World War. Whether we look to Hollywood, where realism is purchased at almost any price, or to the Italian neo-realist cinema, we find that the struggle is to represent reality as effectively as possible; in both cinemas the possibility as such of the representational relation is taken for granted. If cinéma-vérité opposed Hollywood, this opposition was in terms of the effacement of style, where a pristine representation, an authentic relation between film and fact, was contaminated by arrangement and conscious intervention. Only in the early 1960's do we begin to find filmic practices which question the very validity of the representational relation. Within the continental tradition, and owing an explicit debt to neo-realism and particularly to Rossellini, the films of Godard began an investigation of film which took as its object the very processes of representation as well as the problem of what was represented. At the same time, in America, the development of cheaper film-making technology allowed many of the theoretical concerns of modern American painting to find a practical application in film. The name of Warhol can serve as an index of this development. But if these practices can best be articulated outside any representational problematic, the theoretical debates around them have constantly lagged behind those practices and, very often, the most important factor contributing to this backwardness has been difficulties with the problem of realism. At the same time a traditional realism remains the dominant force within the commercial cinema, where, if many of the tricks and effects of other cinemas are constantly borrowed, films like *Nashville* or *American Graffiti* reproduce the major strategies and procedures of films like *Giant* or *The Chase*. Finally, realism poses a constant problem within the Marxist theoretical and political tradition as a legacy of the primacy attached to it in the Soviet Union in the

2. This should not be taken to imply that the cinematic apparatus is ideologically neutral, but that its ideological effects are only one of the determinants of what became the dominant cinema and its ideological effects. Stephen Heath has begun the investigation of this inscription in 'On Screen, in Frame', *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Autumn 1976.

1930's. It is thus difficult in any field of cinema to avoid the term 9
and indeed it is vitally necessary to examine it and its consequences
in some detail.

Realism and Empiricism

As a starting point one could take the objection that realism cannot be dominant in the cinema because Hollywood cinema is not realistic. By the criteria of one of the great realist critics, André Bazin, for a film to be realistic, it must locate its characters and action in a determinate social and historical setting. Most Hollywood films, it could be argued, fail to do this and are, therefore, unrealistic. But Bazin's characterisation of realism is much more centrally concerned with a transparency of form which is reduplicated within Hollywood filmic practice. Bazin's criteria for distinguishing between films can only be based on non-filmic concerns. (It should be said in advance that although these considerations will tend to collapse Hollywood and neo-realist cinema together, there is a different reading of Bazin which could disengage from his text a set of incoherences which can be articulated so as to produce distinctions between neo-realism and much Hollywood cinema such that the value judgements Bazin wished to confer on the post-war Italian cinema could be retained without a commitment to Bazin's theory of representation.)³

For Bazin, as for almost all realist theorists, what is in question is not just a rendering of reality but the rendering of a reality made more real by the use of aesthetic device. Talking of the use of convention within the cinema, Bazin writes that such a use may be made 'at the service or at the disservice of realism, it may increase or neutralise the efficacy of the elements of reality captured by the camera. . . . One can class, if not hierarchise, the cinematographic styles as a function of the gain of reality that they represent. We shall thus call *realist* any system of expression, any narrative procedure which tends to make more reality appear on the screen' (André Bazin: *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?*, Paris 1962, Vol 4, p 22). This 'more' is not quantitative but qualitative: it measures the extent to which the essence of the object represented is grasped. For Bazin the essence is attained through globality and totality; it is understood as coherence. Rossellini's vision is assessed in terms of the globality of the real that it represents: this globality 'does not signify, completely the contrary, that neo-realism can be

3. A good survey of Bazin's comments on realism can be found in Christopher Williams: 'Bazin on Neo-Realism,' *Screen* v 14 n 4, Winter 1973/4, pp 61-8.

10 reduced to some objective documentaryism. Rossellini likes to say that the basis of his conception of mise-en-scène lies in a love not only of his characters but also of reality just as it is and it is exactly this love which forbids him to dissociate that which reality has united; the character and the decor. Neo-realism is defined neither by a refusal to take up a position with regard to the world nor by a refusal to judge it but it supposes in fact a mental attitude; it is always reality seen through an artist, refracted by his consciousness, but by all his consciousness, and not by his reason or his passion or his belief and reconstituted from dissociated elements ' (ibid, p 154).

The central nature of the artistic activity becomes the presentation of a reality more real than that which could be achieved by a simple recording. The play on the notions of 'real' and 'reality' which is involved in Bazin's conception (the artist produces a reality more real than reality) is also the central feature of empiricism. In *Reading Capital* (London 1970, pp 35-6), Louis Althusser locates the specific feature of empiricism not in the confrontation between subject and object which is postulated as anterior to any knowledge (though to be sure empiricism relies on this), but rather in its characterisation of the knowledge to be obtained as defined by the object of which it is knowledge. Althusser writes: 'The whole empiricist process of knowledge lies in that operation of the subject named abstraction. To know is to abstract from the real object its essence, the possession of which by the subject is then called knowledge.' The whole empiricist conception thus depends on two notions of real and ultimately two notions of object and this play suppresses the process at work in the production of knowledge. Bazin too starts out with the reality of everyday life and ends up with the greater reality of the film-maker's representation of it. What must be hidden by the 'author' is the process by which this 'greater reality' is arrived at, for, of course, on this account the 'greater reality' is there all along just waiting to be seen. Thus, for Bazin, any concept of process which would call both subject and object into play instead of positing them as constitutive moments is eliminated. This finds clear expression in his discussion of de Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*:

'As the disappearance of the actor is the result of an overcoming of the style of acting, the disappearance of the mise-en-scène is equally the fruit of a dialectical process of the style of narration. If the event is sufficient unto itself without the director having need to illuminate it by angles or the special position of the camera, it is that it has come to that perfect luminosity which permits art to unmask a nature which finally resembles it' (op cit, p 57).

All interference by the subject must be reduced to a minimum

because such interference involves subject and object in a process which destroys their full and punctual autonomy. The triumph of *Bicycle Thieves* is that it completely does away with the cinematic process. Bazin writes: ' *Bicycle Thieves* is one of the first examples of pure cinema. There are no more actors, no more story, no more mise-en-scène, that is to say finally in the aesthetic illusion of reality – no more cinema ' (ibid, p 59). The revelation of reality is the prime task of the cinema and all aesthetic devices are simply there to unmake themselves so that we too can experience, as the artist experienced before us, that moment at which reality presents itself as whole. 11

Contradiction and the Real

Against this traditional analysis, I argue that film does not reveal the real in a moment of transparency, but rather that film is constituted by a set of discourses which (in the positions allowed to subject and object) produce a certain reality. The emphasis on production must be accompanied by one on another crucial Marxist term, that of contradiction. There is no one discourse that produces a certain reality – to believe so is to fall into the idealism complementary to the empiricism already discussed. A film analysis is dealing with a set of contradictory discourses transformed by specific practices. Within a film text these may be different ' views ' of reality which are articulated together in different ways. Most documentaries (including the anthropological films Mick Eaton and Ivan Ward discuss in their article in this number of *Screen*) bind the images together by the verbal interpretation of the voice-over commentary. Classical fictional cinema, on the other hand, has the crucial opposition between spoken discourses which may be mistaken and a visual discourse which guarantees truth – which reveals all. For this opposition to be set up, the spectator must be placed in a position from which the image is regarded as primary. The movement of this placing can be grasped by considering a third group of films which find their constitutive principle in the refusal so to place the spectator. In a film such as the Dziga-Vertov Group's *Wind from the East* a set of political discourses and images are juxtaposed so that, although what the Second Female Voice says is what the film-makers regard as politically correct, it neither subdues the images, as in the documentary, nor is judged by them. None of the discourses can be read off one against the other. There is no possibility of verification, no correspondence between sound and image enabling the spectator to enter the realm of truth. This dislocation between sound and image focusses attention on the position of the spectator – both in the cinema and politically. These juxtapositions

- 12 make the spectator constantly aware of the discourses that confront him as discourses – as, that is, the production of sets of positions – rather than allowing him to ignore the process of articulation by entering a world of correspondence in which the only activity required is to match one discourse against the realm of truth.

It might here be objected that 'filmic discourse' has not been defined with sufficient precision. Rather than giving an exact definition, one must indicate the range of application of the term. Within language studies, from at least the Renaissance onwards, discourse is the term used to indicate a shifting of attention from the formal oppositions which the linguist attempts to define and articulate to the way in which these formal oppositions relate to the speaking subject. When we talk of 'discourse' we move away from a conception of language as a set of significant oppositions independent of the speaking subject (Saussure's *langue*) to focus on the position of the speaking subject within the utterance. With discourse we become interested in the dialectical relation between speaker and language in which language always already offers a position to the speaker and yet, at the same time, the act of speaking may itself displace those positions. In filmic terms this means the kinds of combinations of words and images which can be differentiated in terms of different positions allocated to the viewer. I hope to make clear the kind of elements involved in this combination later in my examination of *American Graffiti*. For the moment it can be stated that it is neither a question of the filmmaker using a transparent discourse to render the real nor of her or him inventing a discourse which produces a real. Instead the production of a film must be understood as involving a work, a practice, a transformation on and of the discourses available. One such practice, which I have called classical realism,⁴ and shall analyse in *American Graffiti*, involves the homogenisation of different discourses by their relation to one dominant discourse – assured of its domination by the security and transparency of the image. The fact that one such practice involves this homogenisation is a matter of ideological and political but not normative interest. My aim in this article is to demonstrate how the practices which articulate the different elements in the discourses which constitute a filmic text have certain political effects. For the moment, and against a traditional realist emphasis, one could say that, at any given time, it is the contradictory positions available discursively to the subject, together with the positions made available by non-linguistic practices, that constitute the reality of the social situation.

4. In 'Realism and the Cinema: Notes on some Brechtian Theses,' *Screen* v 15 n2, Summer 1974, pp 7-27. For a criticism of the positions put forward in that article, see below.

It is contradiction that Bazin wishes at all costs to conceal and coherence that furnishes him with his crucial emphasis. The coherence and the totality of the artist's vision provide the final criterion of reality – subject and object confront one another in full luminosity. This luminosity draws attention to the fact that the relation is visual – that all we have to do in the cinema is look. It is here that we begin to analyse the practices of classical realist cinema, for the distinguishing feature of these practices is the production of a perfect point of view for the audience – a point of vision. 13

The Point of View and the Look

Jacques Lacan has offered an analysis of vision which is of great relevance to any attempt to understand the reality of film. For Lacan, vision offers a peculiarly privileged basis to an imaginary relation of the individual to the world.⁵ This imaginary relationship is characterised by the plenitude it confers on both subject and object, caught as they are outside any definition in terms of difference – given in a full substantial unity. The imaginary is central to the operations of the human psyche and is constituted as such in early infancy. Somewhere between the sixth and eighteenth month, the small human infant discovers its reflection in the mirror; an apprehension of unity all the more surprising in that it normally occurs before motor control has ensured that unity in practice. The specular relation thus established in this, the mirror phase, provides the basis for primary narcissism, and is then transferred onto the rest of the human world where the other is simply seen as another version of the same – of the 'I' which is the centre of the world. It is only with the apprehension of genital difference that the child leaves the comfortable world of the imaginary to enter into the world of the symbolic. The symbolic is understood by Lacan (after Lévi-Strauss) not as a set of one-to-one relationships but as a tissue of differences which articulate the crucial elements within the child's world. It is the acceptance of a potential lack (castration) which marks the child's access to the symbolic and to language. Language in the realm of the imaginary is understood in terms of some full relation between word and thing; a mysterious unity of sign and referent. In the symbolic,

5. The analysis of a Holbein painting which is discussed in this section can be found in 'Du regard comme objet petit a' in Lacan's *Le Séminaire XI*, Paris 1973, pp 65-109. My understanding of the issues has benefited from Christian Metz's 'The Imaginary Signifier,' *Screen* v16 n2, Summer 1975, pp 14-76, and Jacqueline Rose's British Film Institute Educational Advisory Service seminar paper 'The Imaginary, the Insufficient Signifier', mimeographed.

14 language is understood in terms of lack and absence – the sign finds its definition diacritically through the absent syntagmatic and paradigmatic chains it enters into. As speaking subjects we constantly oscillate between the symbolic and the imaginary – constantly imagining ourselves granting some full meaning to the words we speak, and constantly being surprised to find them determined by relations outside our control. But if it is the phallus which is the determining factor for the entry into difference, difference has already troubled the full world of the infant. The imaginary unity has already been disrupted by the cruel separation from those objects originally understood as part of the subject – the breast and the faeces. The phallus becomes the dominating metaphor for all these previous lacks. Lacan defines the centrality of the phallus for the entry into the symbolic and language when he describes the phallus as ‘the signifier destined to designate the effects, taken as a set, of signified, in so far as the signifier conditions these effects by its presence as signifier’ (*Ecrits*, Paris 1966, p 690). The signified here is exactly the imaginary full meaning constantly contaminated by the signifier’s organisation along constitutive and absent chains.

In *Le Séminaire* XI, Lacan attempts to demonstrate the relation between the symbolic and the imaginary at the level of vision and to demonstrate the existence of lack within the scopical field (this lack being the condition of the existence of desire within the visual field – a desire which can find satisfaction in a variety of forms). Taking the Holbein picture ‘The Ambassadors’ (The National Gallery, London), Lacan comments on the death’s head hidden in the picture by a trick of perspective and only visible from one particular angle. The rest of the picture is caught in the world of the imaginary – the spectator is the all-seeing subject and, as if to emphasise the narcissistic nature of the relation, Holbein fills the picture with Renaissance emblems of vanity. However, the death’s head, perceived when leaving the field of the picture, re-introduces the symbolic. For the death’s head draws attention to the fact that we see the picture at a distance and from a particular angle (if we think back to Bazin’s quote about *Bicycle Thieves*, it is clear that for him cinema must obliterate distance and angles). With the introduction of the spectator’s position the objects simply and substantially there are transformed into a set of differential relationships; a set of traces left by a paint brush; an organised area of space which, from one particular point, can be read as an object. That the object thus seen is a skull is in no way surprising when we consider that the entry into the symbolic can be most simply described as the recognition of the world independently of my consciousness – as the recognition, that is, of the possibility of my own death. Holbein’s picture demonstrates a congruence between the organisation of language and the organisation of the visual field. Just as the constitutive

elements of language must be absent in the moment of speaking, 15
so the constitutive nature of the distance and position of the viewing subject must be absent from the all-embracing world of vision. 'The Ambassadors' re-introduces the look into vision. As such it bears witness to the separation (castration) on which vision is based, but which it endlessly attempts to ignore.

The intervention of the symbolic in the imaginary is already in evidence at the very opening of the mirror-phase. For the infant verifies its reflection by looking to the mother who holds it in front of the mirror. It is the mother's look that confirms the validity of the infant's image and with this look we find that at the very foundation of the dual imaginary relationship there is a third term already unsettling it. The mother verifies the relationship for the child, but at the cost of introducing a look, a difference where there should only be similitude. The fact that this look which both sets up and potentially destroys the full visual field is felt as castration explains why, traditionally, the eye is always evil. We are now in a position to grasp Lacan's claim that the visual is organised in terms of the look (*le regard*) – defined by the others' look that it is not – and of the blot (*la tache*), the fact that any visual field is already structured so that certain effects will be seen, Lacan writes:

'The function of the blot and the look is, at one and the same time, that which commands the most secretly, and that which always escapes the grip of, that form of vision which finds its contentment in imagining itself as consciousness' (*Le Séminaire* XI, op cit, p 71).

Bazin wishes to do away with the camera because it constantly threatens the world of imaginary plenitude and must therefore be repressed at all costs. In its place a visual world is instituted from which the look, any trace of castration, has been expelled. The distinction between the symbolic and the imaginary can be understood in cinematic terms by contrasting the look and the point of view. The point of view is always related to an object (see Edward Branigan: 'Formal Permutations of the Point-of-View Shot,' *Screen* v 16 n 3, Autumn 1975, pp 54-64). But insofar as the object is a given unity there is always the possibility of seeing it together with all the possible points of view – there is always the possibility of a point of over-view. The point of view preserves the primacy of vision, for what is left out of one point-of-view shot can always be supplied by another. The look, however, is radically defective. Where the point of view is related to an object, the look is related to other looks. The look's field is not defined by a science of optics in which the eye features as a geometrical point, but by the fact that the object we are looking at offers a position from which we can be looked at – and this look is not punctual but shifts over the surface. It is important that it is a head that looks back at us

From this account of the pleasure involved in vision it might seem that the ideal film would show us a static perspective. But this is to ignore the dialectic of pleasure and desire revealed to us by Freud.⁶ If, on the one hand, there is a tendency towards stasis, towards a normalisation of excitation within the psyche, there is also a compulsion to repeat those moments at which the stasis is set in motion, at which the level of excitation rises to unbearable heights. The small boy in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in his endless game of *fort-da*, ceaselessly throws away the object at the end of the string only to draw it back and start again. This action, which Freud tells us reproduces the experience of separation from the mother, shows that it is exactly the moment of anxiety, of heightened tension, the moment of coming which is relived in a constant cycle, which threatens life itself. What lies beyond the pleasure principle is not a threatening and exterior reality but a reality whose virulence knows no cessation, the reality of those constitutive moments at which we experience ourselves in the very moment of separation; which moments we are compelled to repeat in that endless movement which can find satisfaction only in death. Desire is only set up by absence, by the possibility of return to a former state – the field of vision only becomes invested libidinally after it has been robbed of its unity by the gaze of the other. The charm of classical realism is that it introduces the gaze of the other but this introduction is always accompanied by the guarantee of the supremacy of the point of view; the threat appears so that it can be smoothed over and it is in that smoothing that we can locate pleasure – in a plenitude which is fractured but only on condition that it will be re-set. Here the stock terms demonstrate what is at stake: the motion pictures, the movies, the flicks; it is the threat of motion, of displacement that is in question, but this threat is overcome from the start.

The logic of this contradictory movement can be understood on the basis of the set of interchanges that take place between screen and viewer – that complicated circulation which ensures that I am not only a spectator in the cinema but also, by a process of identification, a character on the screen. The cinema constantly poses me as the constant point of a fixed triangle and it constantly obscures and effaces the complicated progress of the shots, the impossible movements of that point by the logic of events on the screen. To analyse this process we need the concepts elaborated by Benveniste (*Problems of General Linguistics*, Coral Gables, Florida 1971, Part V) to distinguish between the *sujet de l'énon-*

6. For a summary of Freud's argument in its Lacanian reformulation, see Colin MacCabe: 'Presentation of "The Imaginary Signifier"', *Screen* v 16 n 2, Summer 1975, pp 7-13.

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 ciation and the *sujet de l'énoncé*. Benveniste suggests that to arrive at a logical understanding of tenses and to understand fully the importance of language for subjectivity, the speaker as the producer of the discursive chain, *le sujet de l'énonciation*, must be distinguished from the speaker as the grammatical subject, *le sujet de l'énoncé*. The distance between these two subjects gives us a formal linguistic account of the distance between the philosophical subject, *le sujet de l'énoncé*, the 'I', judge of the correspondence between world and language, and the psychoanalytic subject, the *sujet de l'énonciation*, the 'it', unable to distinguish between word and world and constantly threatening and unmasking the stability of the 'I'. Applied to film this is the distinction between the spectator as viewer, the comforting 'I', the fixed point, and the spectator as he or she is caught up in the play of events on the screen, as he or she 'utters', 'enounces' the film. Hollywood cinema is largely concerned to make these two coincide so that we can ignore what is at risk. But this coincidence can never be perfect because it is exactly in the divorce between the two that the film's existence is possible. This bringing into play of the process of the text's production takes us out of the classical field of semiotics, the field of the *énoncé* in which the text is treated as the assertion of a set of disjunctions permuted to produce actions, and into the question of the production of these very disjunctions. The subject is neither the full presence of traditional 'auteur' criticism nor the effect of the structure of traditional structuralism; it is divided in the movement between the two. The contradiction between *énonciation* and *énoncé* is also the contradiction between narrative and discourse. Narrative is always propelled by both a heterogeneity and a surplus – a heterogeneity which must be *both overcome and prolonged*. The narrative begins with an incoherence but already promises the resolution of that incoherence. The story is the passage from ignorance to knowledge, but this passage is denied as process – the knowledge is always already there as the comforting resolution of the broken coherence (every narration is always a suspense story). Narrative must deny the time of its own telling – it must refuse its status as discourse (as articulation), in favour of its self-presentation as simple identity, complete knowledge.

American Graffiti: an Example

To understand a film like *American Graffiti*, its reality and its pleasure – the reality of its pleasure, it is necessary to consider the logic of that contradiction which produces a position for the viewer but denies that production. To admit that production would be to admit of position, and the position that has been produced

18 is the position of the point of view, promising, as Bazin wished, that the event is sufficient to itself and needs no illumination from angles or the special position of the camera – promising, in short, a supra-positional omniscience, the full imaginary relation. In *American Graffiti* this contradiction of a process of production and the denial of that process takes form around the fact that we know, from the beginning of the narrative, that Curt Henderson will leave the town and yet that we hover, in suspense, over a decision which, once resolved, is obvious. The question, as always in classical realism, is one of identity. This identity may be questioned and suspended, but it is, in a deferred moment, asserted and read back over the text. Nor is this reading back an optional extra. Without it the very concept of identity and truth, the very concept of character, on which classical realism rests would disintegrate. If the hero was not really good (or bad or whatever) all along then there would be no point to the story – the narrative would become merely the retailing of successive states of affairs. The resolution of the identity of Curt Henderson is also the production for the viewer of that point of view from which he can watch the film, but the pleasure of this production is provided by two looks which threaten to disturb that point of view, to displace an identity. These looks are each of a different order and I want to consider them separately, for one remains within the order of pleasure guaranteed by the point of view while the other threatens a disruption of a very different order.

The first look that introduces the moment of heterogeneity and surplus which is the impetus of the narrative comes from the girl in the white T-bird.⁷ Securely placed within a point-of-view shot (Curt Henderson's) it nevertheless troubles a full imaginary identity – throwing open an uncertainty about Curt and his future on the night he has to decide whether to leave town. It is explicitly a gaze of sexuality and introduces the unsettling evidence of woman's desire as the girl mouths 'I love you'. *American Graffiti* thus traverses the classical path of narrative in that it is a desperate attempt to deny sexuality, the knowledge of which provides its first impetus. The girl's glance introduces a look into our point of view and calls attention to our position as we become separated from our full being in the world (as Curt becomes an other for someone he does not know, so he becomes aware of his position, loses the full security of the imaginary). In order to replace ourselves fully in the world it is necessary to refind an origin which can function as a guarantee of identity. In order to overcome the

7. The analysis of the interplay of identification and vision leans heavily on two earlier articles in *Screen* – Stephen Heath: 'Film and System, Terms of Analysis,' v 16 n 1, Spring 1975, pp 7-77 and v 16 n 2, Summer 1975, pp 91-113, and Laura Mulvey: 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' v 16 n 3, Autumn 1975, pp 6-18.

unsettling gaze of the mother we must find a father, someone who will figure as that moment of originating identity and power which will deny the possibility of the interplay of looks. It is this search that Curt Henderson undertakes. His progress from the school-teacher to the Pharaohs to Wolfman Jack is the search for a father who will confirm him in his identity and expunge the possibility of difference; who will reassert the point of view over the look. In the scene in the radio studio we have another very heavily marked point-of-view sequence (three shots of Curt watching, two of Wolfman Jack performing, in exactly the same sequence as we had earlier seen the blonde at the traffic lights) which provides the knowledge to overcome the earlier threat.

It might be objected that this approach ignores the complicated intercrossing of the stories of the four boys. But not only can one find the same logic at play in two of the other three (Milner constitutes a special case), it would also be a mistake to think they are on the same level. *Nashville* and *American Graffiti* are two of a set of films which, although they have borrowed tricks and devices from other cinemas, remain within a traditional Hollywood practice. The two most obvious tricks are the refusal to weight the sound track in the traditional manner, a development drawing on such different sources as Welles, Godard and cinéma-vérité, and, on the other hand, a proliferation of characters such 'that the dominance of narrative has been replaced by the freedom of the 'slice of life''. Both these novelties function as noise rather than structure. A close analysis of the sound shows that a traditional weighting is given to those elements necessary for the development of the narrative. Equally the proliferation of characters does not affect the traditional movement of narrative. Rivette's *Out One: Spectre* is an example of a film which does break down narrative by proliferation of character, but at the cost of an enormous extension of the duration of the film and a genuine inability to find it an end.

It is Curt Henderson's point of view which offers within the narrative that knowledge and security we enjoy as we sit in the cinema, and it is this visual primacy which indicates his traditional centrality to the narrative. For Curt accomplishes the final imaginary task – he discovers the father. For everyone else Wolfman Jack is a name which finds its reality only in the differential world of sound but Curt is able to reunite name and bearer so that a full presence can provide the certainty of what he is and what he must do – he is a *seer* and must leave town in order to see the world. The girl's gaze troubled this identity but in the final shots of the film Curt is in a position where that gaze cannot trouble him. Before she knew who and where he was – now the positions are reversed. And it is from the point of view of the plane that the film accomplishes the progress towards the knowledge implicit in it from the beginning. The primacy of Curt's progress for an under-

20 standing of the film is underlined when the final titles tell us that he is now a writer living in Canada. The implication is that it is he who has written the story, he has conferred on us his point of view.

The other look within the film is of a different order and radically displaces the point of view, introducing a far more threatening moment of separation for the spectator. This look does not occur within the diegetic space between characters but in the space between screen and audience. John Milner and Carol attack a car whose occupants have been so foolish as to throw something at them, racing round it letting down its tyres and covering it in foam. As this happens, changes of camera position are no longer motivated either by point-of-view shots or by diegetic considerations – for a moment we have lost our position and point of view as the camera breaks the 180-degree rule, though this losing of position has a certain diegetic motivation in the actions of John and Carol. Most significantly, we see the film lights appear beside the car. The diegetic space is broken up as the film looks back at us. This encounter with the real, this movement into the symbolic is the moment of ecstasy in which Carol squirts foam all over the car and Milner lets down all the tyres (a sexual symbolism obvious enough), showing us that the pleasure involved here is of a more radical nature – a pleasure of tension and its release. If Curt provides the pleasure of security and position, John Milner functions as that threatening repetition which can only end in death and which offers no position but rather ceaseless motion. This is not to suggest that Milner offers any real alternative in the film; if he did it would contaminate the pleasure provided by Curt more significantly. But as the representative of an element which finds its definition outside the synchronic space of the other characters, he introduces time in a potentially threatening way. The political nature of the film, as will be argued later, depends on a repression of time outside a process of natural growth. Milner introduces, admittedly in a minimal way, a time which is not reducible to this natural cycle – his attitude to the culture is different from that of the other boys, because he is older than they.

The Question of the Audience

What has been said so far may seem to have removed all questions of realism and film from any consideration of their social conditions of production and reception. Concentration on the organisation of the text has proposed a viewer caught only within an atemporal movement between the symbolic and the imaginary and confronted only by the reality of difference. It might seem from

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this that film and, by implication, art in general, are caught in an eternal battle between the imaginary fullness of ideology and the real emptiness of the symbolic. Nothing could be further from my intentions in this article. My aim is to introduce certain general concepts which can be used to analyse film in a determinate social moment. That the breaking of the imaginary relation between text and viewer is the first pre-requisite of political questions in art has, I would hold, been evident since Brecht. That the breaking of the imaginary relationship can constitute a political goal in itself is the ultra-leftist fantasy of the surrealists and of much of the avant-garde work now being undertaken in the cinema. In certain of their formulations this position is given a theoretical backing by the writers of the *Tel Quel* group.

I hope that my analysis of *American Graffiti* has sketched in outline how the process of the production of a point of view for the spectator is effaced by mechanisms of identification. What is politically important about this textual organisation is that it removes the spectator from the realm of contradiction. But it is not just contradiction in general that is avoided but a specific set of contradictions – those raised by the impact of the Vietnam War on American society. Portrait of a pre-Vietnam America, the film presents to us the children of the Kennedy Generation in the age of innocence – an innocence that we can regard from our position of knowledge. But this knowledge presupposes us outside politics now, outside contradiction. Indeed, Curt Henderson is a writer living in Canada, reflecting on an earlier reality of America that could not be sustained. (The fact that the writer is living in Canada is a further index of the repression of Vietnam – he has presumably dodged the draft, but this remains unspoken: to interrogate that decision would introduce contradiction.) The passing of innocence is reduced in the film to the process of growing up – there is no way in which external forces could be introduced into the homogeneous society of small-town California. Toad grows up and goes off to die at An Loc but this is simply part of a human cycle. The position of the viewer after the Vietnam War is simply held to be the same but different – the position of the imaginary. The Vietnam War is repressed and smoothed over.

However, if this is our criticism of the film it is clear that what we object to is not the fact that bits of reality have somehow got left out, but rather the whole relation of the film to its audience. The audience and their representations are the terms of the 'realism' of any film or work of art – not some pre-existent reality which it merely conveys. Nor should this be thought novel within the socialist tradition, for I would argue that Engels's and Lenin's comments on realism are prompted by these considerations, and if they used what tools they had to hand and are thus given to talking in representational terms then we, seventy years later, should not be worried about discarding these terms.

22 In his letter to Minna Kautsky of November 26, 1885 on her novel *The Old and the New*, Engels wrote that he had nothing against politically didactic writing, but then went on to say:

‘But I believe the tendency must spring forth from the situation and the action itself, without explicit attention called to it; the writer is not obliged to offer to the readers the future historical solution of the social conflicts he depicts. Especially in our conditions, the novel primarily finds its readers in bourgeois circles, circles not directly related to our own, and there the socialist tendentious novel can fully achieve its purpose, in my view, if, by conscientiously describing the real mutual relations, it breaks down the conventional illusions dominating them, shatters the optimism of the bourgeois world, causes doubts about the validity of the existing order, and this without directly offering a solution or even, under some circumstances, taking an ostensibly partisan stand.’

Within this passage Engels is using more than one criteria of realism. He calls not simply for a description of the real mutual relations but for one such that they will be directly related to their audience. The text is determined not only by the situation to be represented but by its audience as well. These considerations also dominate Lenin's writing on literature. In the articles on Tolstoy which contain his most lengthy consideration of literary matters, the present political conjuncture is always dominant. Before all else it is essential to grasp the political situation to which they are addressed. They are written to combat two prevailing views of Tolstoy – opposed but complementary. On the one hand, Lenin wishes to wrest Tolstoy from those reactionary critics who want to clasp the religious Tolstoy to their bosom and thus present him as fundamentally in favour of the status quo. On the other hand, Lenin is concerned to correct those on the left like Plekhanov who see no more in Tolstoy than a religious mystic and thus reject his work as of no value. Left and right within this circle can agree on the identity of Tolstoy. Lenin, however, protests that there is no such identity, but rather a set of contradictions which must be grasped and understood as an urgent political task. Lenin never ceases to emphasise that the reality of Tolstoy is contradictory – that it is composed both of a bitter and undying enmity for the social system which has brought about the social conditions in Russia but that this enmity goes together with the most reactionary mystical and religious ideology with the result that *Tolstoyism* is a profound obstacle to revolutionary change in Russia. In addition to this emphasis on change and contradiction Lenin is emphatic that Tolstoy is typical, that he ‘represents’ the period 1861-1905, the period, that is, between the freeing of the serfs and the unsuccessful revolution of 1905. Understanding the contradiction that is Tolstoy is important because it ‘represents’ on the literary level the political problem of the peasantry in Russia –

the peasantry is a force of great revolutionary potential and yet it is held back by a very reactionary ideology. Only by understanding these two contradictory facets can one correctly analyse the situation in Russia. 23

It is important to have these facts clear before considering the problem of the vocabulary Lenin uses in these articles, a vocabulary of expression and representation which finds its most characteristic form in the metaphor of the mirror.⁸ Indeed the first article on Tolstoy is entitled 'Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution' and it begins with the following paragraph:

'To identify the great artist with the revolution (of 1905) which he has obviously failed to understand, and from which he obviously stands aloof, may at first sight seem strange and artificial. A mirror which does not reflect things correctly could hardly be called a mirror. Our revolution, however, is an extremely complicated thing. Among the mass of those who are directly making and participating in it there are many social elements which have obviously not understood what is taking place and which also stand aloof from the real historical tasks with which the course of events has confronted them. And if we have before us a really great artist, he must have reflected in his work at least some of the aspects of the revolution.'

Thus this mirror that is Tolstoy and his work are so described that the metaphor cannot function coherently. Not only is it a mirror that does not reflect, it is also a mirror that participates in a process without understanding it and, as a participant, must presumably be affected by and affect that process. It is a mirror that acts. A mirror that alters the very scene it is reflecting. To complete the paragraph Lenin adds an assertion which has nothing to do with what has gone before. In any case, he argues, Tolstoy is a great artist and if this is so then his work *must* reflect his time. Thus within Lenin's text we can discern two claims. First that to understand Tolstoy is to understand the period 1861-1905 (here Tolstoy is a mirror but a mirror which acts) and second that the relation between Tolstoy and his time is the necessary relation that holds between a great artist and the society in which he lives and works.

These opening remarks provide Lenin with the space to go on to say that Tolstoy is of such supreme importance not because he represents a reactionary peasant ideology which already exists, but rather because he produces an ideology which the peasant is likely to espouse. And this production of ideology is not a separate activity from Tolstoy's writing. Ideology is produced within the

8. For a detailed consideration of Lenin's use of the metaphor of the mirror, see Pierre Macherey: *Pour une théorie de la production littéraire*, Paris 1967, pp 125-58.

- 24 work of literature; in so far as the artist is able to grasp and articulate the social changes taking place within the world of individuals and feelings, within the world of identification, he will offer an explanation of them; he will proffer an ideology. In so far as the reader is offered both a description and an explanation of his or her own life (and the description and explanation are one and the same process), he or she may adopt the ideological viewpoint of the text. It is here that ideology accomplishes its real effects, as the representation of the real conditions of existence affects those conditions themselves. Tolstoy's skill as a writer is part and contradictory parcel of his importance as a reactionary ideologue and both must be understood to understand the peasantry. For Lenin, as for Engels,⁹ what is at issue is not simply the reality external to the text but the reality of the text itself. We must understand the text's effectivity within the social process, which is to say we have to consider the relation between reader and text in its historical specificity.

Conclusions and Consequences

In my earlier article, 'Realism and the Cinema: Notes on some Brechtian Theses' (*Screen* v 15 n 2, Summer 1974), I argued for a typology of texts classified according to the organisation of discourses within them. What was crucial was not the content of the text but the relations inscribed for the reader. The real was not an external object represented in the text but the relation between text and reader which reduplicated or cut across the subject's relation to his or her experience. Classically, realism depended on obscuring the relation between text and reader in favour of a dominance accorded to a supposedly given reality, but this dominance, far from sustaining a 'natural' relation, was the product of a definite organisation which, of necessity, effaced its own workings. In so far as the 'reality' thus granted dominance was in contradiction with the ideologically dominant determinations of reality, then a text could be deemed progressive, but nevertheless such an organisation was fundamentally reactionary for it posed a reality which existed independently of both the text's and the reader's activity, a reality which was essentially non-contradictory and unchangeable. Alternatively one could have an organisation of discourses which broke with any dominance and which, as such, remained essentially subversive of any ideological order. At the end of the article I raised the question as to whether there could be a revolutionary film which would subvert the traditional position

9. And also I would argue for Marx – see his letter to Ferdinand Lassalle of April 19, 1859.

of the spectator in a more positive fashion than the simple de- 25
construction of the subversive film or whether any such positivity
inevitably replaced one in a position of imaginary dominance.

Although I think that the earlier article can be read in a more
favourable light, there is no doubt that it is contaminated by
formalism; by a structuralism that it claimed to have left behind.
Traditional criticism holds text and author/reader separate, with
the author able to inject meaning which is then passed on to the
reader. The position outlined in my article made the subject the
effect of the structure (the subject is simply the sum of positions
allocated to it) but it preserved the inviolability and separateness
of the text – no longer given as an immutable content fixed in its
determinations by reality through the author, but rather as
immutable structure determining reality and author/reader in
their positions. But the text has no such separate existence. If we
dissolve the reader into the text in the system of identification
which I have outlined in this article, it is impossible to hold text
and reader (or author as first reader) separate. Rather it is a
question of analysing a film within a determinate social moment
so that it is possible to determine what identifications will be
made and by whom, the way Lenin analyses Tolstoy.¹⁰ The text
has no separate existence and, for this reason, it is impossible to
demand a typology of texts such as I proposed in my earlier article.
Rather each reading must be a specific analysis which may use
certain general concepts but these concepts will find their articula-
tion within the specific analyses and not within an already defined
combinatory.

Realism is no longer a question of an exterior reality nor of the
relation of reader to text, but one of the ways in which these two
interact. The film-maker must draw the viewer's attention to his or
her relation to the screen in order to make him or her 'realise'
the social relations that are being portrayed. Inversely one could
say that it is the 'strangeness' of the social relations displayed
which draws the viewer's attention to the fact that he or she is
watching a film. It is at the moment that an identification is
broken, becomes difficult to hold, that we grasp in one and the
same moment both the relations that determine that identity and
our relation to its representation.¹¹ Oshima's *Death by Hanging*
offers an excellent example of a film in which the indissociability
of 'the real' from reality is demonstrated, in which the learning
of our position in the cinema is also the learning of the social
reality of Japan. (It would be in terms of the way that the artist

10. Such an analysis, it must be emphasised, has nothing to do with
a counting of heads but is a class analysis. Its validity will be
determined in its relations to practice, both political and cinematic.

11. This is the burden of the argument in Colin McCabe: 'The
Politics of Separation,' *Screen* v 15 n 4, Winter 1975/6, pp 46-61.

26 analyses our moments of constitutive separation in terms of social reality that one might formulate a justification for Lenin's unsubstantiated claim that any great artist must 'reflect' the great social changes of his time.) In *Death by Hanging*, R, having failed to die, must learn who he is so that he can be hanged again fully conscious of his crime. As he learns to take up his position sexually and socially so that he can understand why he, a Korean sub-proletarian, raped and murdered a Japanese girl, so we too are learning what it is to sit in the cinema. The documentary style of the opening of the film merges into fiction and then fantasy without any of the conventional markers. We have constantly to re-find our place, both in the execution hut and in the story. Subjective shots are eschewed, as are the normal rules for the organisation of cinematic space. One of the results of the lack of subjective shots is that they can be used to great effect at certain moments, as when R confronts the girl he will attack. At the narrative level we are constantly unsure both of the status of events (fact, fiction or fantasy within fiction) but also of how to understand the 'ridiculous' prison officers. As we watch the Education Officer there is a kind of irony at work which completely undercuts any position of knowledge. In a film like *American Graffiti* we can find a very classical irony whereby we are constantly aware that everything is too perfect to be true, but this irony simply confirms us in our dominance, for the perfection guarantees the imaginary truth of the story. In *Death by Hanging*, the comic antics of the Education Officer deprive us of any fixed position from which we could gather his activities into a coherent 'character'. Unable to 'place' him, we are forced to pay attention to him, to listen to his ridiculous logic, outside any certain realm of truth. The irony of *Death by Hanging* dissolves any area of truth which could be established by judging its correspondence to reality. Story of an identity (R must learn who he is), *Death by Hanging* dissolves the identity into a set of relationships which once grasped can be transformed. It is because he has understood them as a set of relationships that R can transform them at the end of the film. The introduction of his sister introduces a reality into his fantasies which means that he can no longer act them out in the real world. As this introduction of a radical otherness destroys R's fantasies so the film destroys our fantasies by the introduction of its own reality. At the end of the film we no longer have our fantasies of Koreans, of executions but only on the condition that we no longer have our fantasy of the cinema.

The cost of ignoring these considerations can be seen in the TV play *The Lump*, produced by Tony Garnett, written by Jim Allen and directed by Jack Gold in 1969. Posed once again as a problem of identity – will the young student who has taken part in the strike on the building site be won to the truth of the revolutionary cause, or will he prefer to opt out and reveal his

weakness? – *The Lump* contains all its material within the most 27
conventional diegetic and cinematic space. As a result of this imprisonment it is impossible for the film-makers to introduce any historical component – the relations of the present struggle to the Russian Revolution or to the experience of Thomas Hardy – without such forced diegetic motivation – a poster of Lenin, the example of the slogan 'Peace, Land, Bread', a bedside copy of *Jude the Obscure* – that the purpose of the reference is lost except on those who know it already. At the same time it is impossible to introduce any element of criticism or information which would not fracture the transparent space and make us aware that we are watching a 'political' film. Thus there can be no criticism of the attitude to women within the text (women are expunged completely from this world of identity except for Yorky's comment that he wants 'to get a leg over'), nor can there be any real information about the conditions of the Irish workers that cannot be 'realistically' conveyed in a short speech by a character. The introduction of any of these elements might be held to destroy the popular appeal of the film and deprive the makers of the possibility of arousing the support of a mass audience for the scandals of the building industry, and more generally for the support of left-wing views. But the content of the left-wing commitment is so vague, as a necessary consequence of the refusal to introduce the spectator to his or her own constitutive contradictions, that it is doubtful whether anybody is won by the film to anything. The mechanisms at work in *The Lump* are the same as those used in *The Sweeney* to elicit sympathy for a copper who bends the rules. One can lend this sympathy for an hour without having to change one's attitudes or beliefs because of the occultation of the relation between viewer and text which allows the spectator to remain both on and off screen in that interchange I have already sketched. It is by the interruption of that channel that one begins engagement with the real – until then there is simply the endless repetition of the imaginary.

Readers' Meeting

The Editorial Board invites the readers of *Screen* to the third open meeting to discuss the contents of this number with the Board and with some of the contributors. The meeting will take place on Saturday, November 20 at 11.00 am in the offices of SEFT at 29 Old Compton Street, London W1V 5PL.



Regional Reading Groups

For some time SEFT has been looking for effective ways of expanding its work outside London. Recently there has been a development which we want very much to support and which we hope could be the basis for a new pattern of activity.

In March 1975 a SEFT reading/study group was formed in North Staffordshire. This happened independently, but the group has kept in close touch with the office in London, sending copies of minutes of discussions, etc. (A report of this group's work can be found in the companion issue of *Screen Education*, n 20.) We would like to encourage the creation, wherever possible, of similar SEFT groups, basing their work, like the North Staffs group, on reading and discussing material from *Screen* and/or *Screen Education*, but of course making their own decisions about organisation, procedure, field of interest and programme of study. Teachers, for example, might be particularly interested in establishing curriculum development groups.

In order to encourage this potential area for development we have produced a complete regional list of our membership organised according to the counties of Great Britain and countries of the world. If any readers who are also members of SEFT are interested in helping to form such groups they should contact us and we should be very pleased to provide, free of charge, a copy of this list, so that they can contact other members in their area. We hope to be able to assist such groups (and their creation) financially, initially with postage costs, but eventually, if the venture proves to be successful, with possible film hire, duplication of materials, travel costs, etc. Our weekend schools could eventually be related to the work of the SEFT groups (the North Staffs group are already trying to set up a weekend school in Manchester on 'Coronation Street') and, by liaison with the Regional Education Officers of the Educational Advisory Service of the British Film Institute, more directly practical help might be given through Regional Film Theatres, etc.

We hope that as many of our members as possible will feel able to help in the formation of such groups, for we are very keen to increase the intercommunication both within and between regions, including London.

Vampyr and the Fantastic*

Mark Nash

I The Fantastic

'In a world which is indeed our world, the one we know, a world without devils, sylphides, or vampires, there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world. The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is a victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination – and the laws of the world remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality – but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us. . . . The fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty. Once we choose one answer or the other, we leave the fantastic for a neighbouring genre, the uncanny or the marvellous. The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event' (Tzvetan Todorov: *The Fantastic, a Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, Press of Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio 1975, p 25).

Recent work on the structural analysis of literature has succeeded in defining a genre of the *fantastic*.¹ In extending this work to

* This article forms part of ongoing post-graduate work at the Slade Film Unit, University College London, under the guidance of Paul Willemen. An earlier version, containing a complete shot-by-shot analysis of *Vampyr*, is available for reference at the British Film Institute. I should like to thank Jeremy Bolton and the National Film Archive staff for their help in making a print of the film easily available, and Erich Sargent and Nicky North of the Educational Advisory Service of the British Film Institute, and Kari Hanet for their help and advice.

1. For the purposes of this article I have adopted this not very satisfactory translation for the French term *fantastique*.

30 film, I suggest an analogous cinematic genre, the cinefantastic, and demonstrate in relation to Dreyer's *Vampyr* that the conditions necessary for this genre are provided for, in part, in this filmic text by a code of 'pronoun functions'.

For a text to belong to the genre of the fantastic, two conditions must be fulfilled, according to Tzvetan Todorov:

First, the text must oblige the reader to regard the diegesis as a complete world, and to hesitate between a natural and a supernatural explanation for the events described. The reader's hesitation is often, though not necessarily, inscribed in the text through an individual character in the diegesis who also experiences the hesitation.

Second, the reader must adopt an attitude to the text which rejects both allegorical and poetic interpretation. An allegorical interpretation is only possible when the text explicitly demands a systematic double reading for each element of the work. A poetic interpretation can only be demanded by those texts which do not present fictions, ie coherent diegetic worlds, whereas the fantastic is clearly a genre of fiction.

The structural unity of the literary fantastic is achieved by procedures at the levels of enounced and enunciation (*énoncé* and *énonciation* – see *Screen* v 16 n 2, Summer 1975, p 14 n 2). Those in the enounced derive from a special use of rhetorical figures, which, since they depend on the verbal nature of the enounced, have no immediate application to film with its different matters of expression, and I shall therefore ignore them in this study of *Vampyr*. In the enunciation, a common procedure is the use of narration in the first person. This is particularly suited to the fantastic because it facilitates the identification of the reader with the character of the narrator in the diegesis, whose discourse can then be used by the author to lie, creating uncertainty as to the reality of the events described. When the problem of belief is not at issue, as in the neighbouring genre of the marvellous (where it is a condition of the genre that we accept everything we are told), the impersonal mode of narration is more often used.

In *Vampyr*,² hesitation between natural and supernatural expla-

2. My analysis is based on the National Film Archive viewing copy, but I use a shot numbering based on that of Buzzi and Lattuada (*Vampyr*, Sceneggiatura n 3, second series, Biblioteca Cinematografica, Milan 1948). It should perhaps be pointed out here that the print of *Vampyr* currently being distributed in England by Cinegate is shorter than the Archive print. In it the first meeting between Gray and the doctor is intercut with the visit of Marguerite Chopin which immediately succeeds it, and includes a shot (of a servant running downstairs) from the scene of the father's death. This latter scene is cut short (some of the shots illustrated in the stills accompanying this article are missing from the Cinegate print). The point-of-view shots from the coffin are cut together, eliminating shots of Gray seen in the coffin. These variations can be accounted for

ations of diegetic events concerns particularly the 'reality status' 31
of the father's visit to Gray at the hotel (Shots 28-53 – cf Table 2) and Gray's 'seeing' his own body in a coffin (Shots 318-381 – cf Table 4). 'There exist certain beings whose very lives seem bound by invisible chains to the supernatural. They crave solitude – to be alone and dream. Their imagination is so developed that their vision reaches beyond that of most men. David Gray's personality was thus mysterious. One evening, lured by the fascination of the unknown, he came after sunset to the inn which is by the river in the village of COURTEMPIERRE'. The status of the reality revealed by the two functions, imagination and vision, introduced in this opening intertitle (Shot 1) in relation to the central character of David Gray, is central also to the problematic of the two literary modes of the fantastic, concerned with themes of the self, the 'I' – that typical of the stories of Gérard de Nerval, centring on imagination, and that found in those of E T A Hoffmann, centring on vision. The text of *Vampyr* partakes of both of these. Only 'so developed' an imagination as David Gray's could be drawn into the events of the narrative. He is as it were predestined for it. But once Gray's action within the narrative begins, the film's problematic shifts to that of vision, the status of what Gray (and, by identification with him, the reader) sees.

The scene – 'after sunset . . . the inn which is by the river . . .' – is denotatively twilight, that time of day when vampires can emerge, no longer fearing the direct rays of the sun, and also connotes Hades, the Greek realm of the undead. This broad semantic field is soon specified more precisely by diegetic events and further intertitles (eg the reaper at the ferry, the tolling of the bell as Gray crosses the threshold of the inn, the etching in the room in the genre 'Death pays a call', all strengthen this 'Hades' element). Gray is shown to a room in the inn. Hearing a sound of muttering outside his room he investigates, meeting a man with a deformed face. He retreats to his room, locking the door. Shot 27, the second intertitle – 'Such a wonderful night. Unreal, wierd, fantastic – Strange omen? David Gray has retired for the night but an atmosphere loaden with mystery keeps him awake' – suggests in its indication that Gray is awake, a reading of the subsequent action, the father's visit, as real. The events represented

by loss, errors in reprinting, etc. For the purposes of this article the most significant changes are in the intertitles which were re-written by H G Weinberg in 1967 such that they obscure the way they work in the Archive print, in particular to structure our reading of the film as a fantastic text; the new intertitles attempt to motivate and gloss the action of the opening segments of the film. For example, David Gray is presented as a specialist in the occult, the hesitation between imaginary and real in Intertitle 3 is elided, etc. The pages of the book have also been retranslated with some confusion of sense.

32 – the door key moving in the lock by itself, the change in light intensity as the door opens and the father enters, and the lack of eyeline matching and verbal communication between Gray and the father all suggest the supernatural. The subsequent intertitle – ‘Is it a ghost or a dream or some poor creature seeking his help?’ – re-marks the hesitation between real and supernatural explanations already established. The father leaves a package inscribed ‘To be opened after my death’ (Shot 49), and hesitation is again re-marked, reinforced in the filmic text, when the package reappears in Gray’s possession, is opened (Shots 179, 179’) and found to contain a book – *Strange Tale of the Vampires* – giving an account of the events at Courtempierre as if the present of the film’s narrative were already past, inscribed in the book.

Further instances of uncertainty are manifested in the large segment of the narrative (Shots 318-381) initiated by the splitting of Gray’s image into two as he rests on a bench. One image remains sitting down, as if sleeping, the other gets up (suggesting that the subsequent action is to be read as a dream) and runs through the park to a building where he discovers his own body in a coffin. With the approach of the doctor and the corporal, he hides under a trapdoor, and looks on as a coffin is prepared. At this point (Shot 351), Gray’s image is no longer the translucent image (produced by the superimposition of separately filmed action) which separated at the bench in the park, but one of ordinary density (see stills accompanying Table 4). This apparent ‘reality’ of Gray as observer suggests that this ‘dream’ might after all be real, yet the events (Gray seeing his own body in a coffin) are too implausible for that. This mark of hesitation is reinforced by a change in the character origin of the point-of-view shots from shots of Gray observing the preparation of the coffin via point-of-view shots of the corporal preparing the coffin to shots from the place of the ‘corpse’, followed by an extended series of point-of-view shots from the coffin as it is carried to the churchyard.

‘In Dreyer’s *Vampyr*, as a friend points out, the camera moves from house to cemetery recording *what the dead man sees*: such is the extreme limit at which representation is outplayed; the spectator can no longer take up any position, for he cannot identify his eye with the closed eyes of the dead man; the tableau has no point of departure, no support, it gapes open’ (Roland Barthes: ‘Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein,’ *Screen* v 15 n 2, Summer 1974, p 38).

The eyes of the ‘dead’ man are, however, physically open. Barthes’s friend’s faulty remembrance is significant, for if the eyes *were* closed, then indeed the scene would be unreadable. It is through this possibility that he is not dead, that (through the coding of subjective shots, point of view) his eyes do see, that the hesitation is brought into play, allowing this series of images

to be read, as part of the fantastic. The 'point of departure of the tableau' is precisely the fantastic, representation is not 'outplayed', it remains intact. The loss of Gray as observer, the lack of any re-marking of the text as 'dream' (no distortions of the images, ripples, gauzes, etc), yet the impossibility of the events being real, of the reader identifying with the point of view of a dead man, maintains that reader's uncertainty as to the status of these diegetic events. That there follows a shot (Shot 381) of the two images of Gray joining back together only marks a momentary ascendancy of the 'dream' coding of the diegesis. Later (Shot 421) Gray will return to this building to rescue Gisèle whom he found tied up there during this same 'dream'. Thus the constant re-inscription of figures of uncertainty into the text counteracts the tendency of film to 'naturalise' the diegetic reality of events (*l'effet de réel*).

The second condition for the fantastic can be illustrated a *contrario* by reference to some examples from criticism lacking Todorov's conception of the fantastic and tending in its place to force allegorical or poetic readings on to the text of *Vampyr*. For instance the 'inadequate' motivation of David Gray (as of the other characters in the film) has been read as indicating an allegorical search for self-identity as the theme of the film. Such a reading would require the presentation of a systematic double interpretation for each element of the work to substantiate the claim for allegory, rather than simply using the appeal to allegory to retrieve the character of Gray for psychological realism. It is part of the system of the fantastic to deny our sense of causality, of the motivation for characters' actions, so that we are uncertain as to the interpretation of those actions.

A more systematic example of the allegorical fallacy is to be found in Philippe Parrain's 'Dreyer, cadres et mouvements,' (*Etudes Cinématographiques* nn 53-6, Paris 1967), in which structures are isolated and allegorical significance attributed to them in the manner of a simple equation. Light values, for instance, are said to be coded as follows:

Signifier	Carried by	Signified
black	shadows	error
grey	mist	error in search of truth
white	light	truth

Parrain also claims that horizontality and verticality are opposed, and (drawing on the procedures of art criticism and significations supposedly constant in post-Renaissance art) signify as follows:

Signifier	Carried by	Signified
horizontality	exteriors	rest, openness, freedom
verticality	interiors	drama, intimacy, oppression

This goes some way towards the systematic double interpretation characteristic of allegory, but by no means far enough. It merely indicates areas of possible connotations which could only be sub-

34 stantiated if the analysis showed them to be multiply coded across a range of matters of expression, constituting a system of some coherence, rather than being vague open signifieds naturalising *Vampyr* into the discourse of a humanist art criticism instead of bearing some specific relation to it. Parrain has no way of dealing with what he himself describes as the 'lack of homogeneity in the film', its 'labyrinthine, disorientating qualities', produced by the 'breaking of the ninety- and 180-degree rules' (p 134).

Readings of *Vampyr* embodying the poetic fallacy, ie effectively denying its representational aspect, can be exemplified by the combination of impressionism and formalism that notes 'certain rhythms . . ., a strange pre-established harmony . . ., a gliding white storm' (Claude Beylie in *Midi-Minuit Fantastique* n 20, October 1968, p 68), and by the invocation of the notion of the surreal by the critic of *Anthologie du cinéma* n 53, who writes, with reference to the problematic 'dream' sequence already discussed: 'Seen or imagined? Real or imaginary? The difference is irrelevant for the imagination liberated from logic' (p 130). This is precisely a dismissive recognition of the problematic of the fantastic.

In the fantastic text the reader's hesitation may be represented through the experience of hesitation by a character in the diegesis. In *Vampyr*, the implicit reader's hesitation is presented both through the perception of David Gray – through the point-of-view shot – and independently of it. An example of the former is Shot 331, where we see over Gray's shoulder his 'double' in the coffin; an example of the latter is Shot 318, the 'splitting' of Gray's image already mentioned. An interesting combination is provided by the disturbing change in the position of the look already mentioned in which a shot of David Gray watching from under a trapdoor (Shot 351) is followed by a subjective shot from inside the coffin, implying that Gray has somehow been transferred into the coffin alive. In Todorov's words, 'We wonder if what we saw was not a trick, or an error of perception. In other words, we do not know what interpretation to give to certain perceptible events' (op cit, p 36). I shall later want to argue that the dialectic between the impersonal shots (those independent of Gray's perception) and the point-of-view structures in the film is the major structure supporting the fantastic, and further examples will be given then.

II Pronoun Functions and Point of View

'The concept of point of view is analogous to that of perspective in painting or film. . . . Many experiments have proved that shooting long sequences from the viewpoint of one of the characters results in a loss of the sense of subjective focus rather than a gain, since the audience starts to interpret the shots as

normal scenic filming. In order to present a sequence of film text as embodying the point of view of a particular character, it is necessary (through montage) to alternate the shots taken from his point in space with shots which fix his position from somewhere outside him, from the audience's (ie nobody's) point of view or that of other characters' (Jurij M Lotman: 'Point of View in a Text,' *New Literary History* v VI, n 2, 1975).

Point of view has a long literary history, it being the mechanism by which the author articulates his relation to the cultural text in which his work is inscribed. In mediaeval sacred texts, for instance, this relation was conceived as one of identity. The cultural text, 'the world', had the same creator as the particular written text, the human writer being merely a medium for the divine.

In his examination of point of view in *Touch of Evil* (Screen v 16 n 2, Summer 1975, pp 110-12), Stephen Heath isolates a continuous impersonal mode into which characters' perspectives are inscribed. At certain moments this impersonal mode is 'doubled' with an accompanying character point of view. The reader identifies with a character in the impersonal, then with the character's point of view when the impersonal is doubled with the 'personal' in the point-of-view shot. Certain 'exceptional' moments in the classical realist text – subjective distortion, usually signifying character abnormality, and authorial demonstration with stylistic deviation in formal devices such as tilts, unusual angles, etc – are, I suggest, systematised in this fantastic text and constituted by the inscription of authorial personal marks into the 'subjective' (point-of-view) shots of Gray ('subjective distortion') and the 'descriptive' impersonal shots ('authorial demonstration'). These two modes of authorial inscription I designate below as the displaced and non-assigned first-person functions respectively.

In the classical realist text, narrative control depends on the maintenance of subject continuity in the impersonal and the rhyming variation of 'personal' marks over that continuity. In the fantastic text, on the other hand, the authorial marks disrupt subject continuity. Undermining character point of view (Gray's and, by identification, the spectator's) and 'authorial demonstration' will be seen to constitute the figures of the fantastic.

Thus the fantastic revolves around the issue of person, and in order to specify these figures more precisely we must consider this central linguistic concept in some detail. As Emile Benveniste has shown (*Problems in General Linguistics*, University of Miami Press, Coral Gables Fla 1971), the category of 'person' in verbal language is organised according to two oppositions: person/non-person and 'I'/'non-I' (within the first term of the first opposition). Person is further specified according to gender and number,

36 but these distinctions are of minor importance to the genre of the fantastic.

	enunciation	
	+	-
1. Person (+)/Non-person (-)	<i>discours</i>	<i>histoire</i>
2. 'I' (+)/'Non-I' (-)	+	-
	'I'	'you'
		'he' 'she' 'it'

The opposition of person and non-person corresponds to two distinct discursive registers: *discours* and *histoire*; the former presupposes both a narrator and a listener (addresser and addressee) and an intention on the narrator's part to influence the listener in some way, and its time (tense system) is adapted to the temporality of the speaker-narrator; in the latter 'it is a question of the presentation of facts having occurred at a certain moment in time, without any intervention of the narrator in the *écrit*' (Todorov in Macksey and Donato, eds, *The Structuralist Controversy*, Baltimore 1970, p 130), so the tense system is adapted to the recounting of past events without any intervention by the speaker and is in consequence deprived of present and future, with the aorist as its specific tense, the only tense missing from the system of *discours*, its presence and absence, together with the presence and absence of personal marks, articulating the opposition between *discours* and *histoire*.

Any of the graphic instances 'I', 'you', 'he', 'she', 'it' may function in either of these discursive registers. The one they are in fact functioning in can be determined by commutation. If in a particular utterance the graphic instance 'he' is semantically commutable with the 'I' of the originator of the discourse, then this instance of 'he' belongs in the system of person. (Thus what I shall call 'pronoun functions' to distinguish them from linguistic pronouns *stricto sensu* might perhaps more accurately be called 'shifters', following Roman Jakobson, in that they are coded elements – establishable by commutation – which nonetheless only signify by reference to a particular message or enunciation. See Roman Jakobson: *Selected Writings* Vol II, The Hague 1971, pp 130-47.) As Barthes points out (*The Structuralist Controversy*, op cit, p 140), narrative signs of the person adopt ruses, give no clear indication of the underlying status of the utterance. The character in the novel who says 'I' is not necessarily the 'I' of the *discours*, of the subject/origin of the utterance; he or she may only be a character and the status of his or her utterances in the novel need not bring them closer to the origin of the utterance, the authorial subject.

Todorov (*The Structuralist Controversy*, op cit, p 132) gives an outline classification of point of view in literature according

to the degree of separation of these two 'I's. One class has an omniscient narrator whose 'I' constantly surfaces through the 'she' or 'he' of the character (eg character as the author's voice in Jane Austen). In another the narrator's 'I' is repressed, the narrative pretending to complete objectivity, the absence of any privileged position (eg the 'objective' writing of Hemingway and others in America in the 1920's and 1930's). A third, most characteristic of the discourse of the 'traditional' realist novel, contains first-person narration, but with the narrator's and the character's 'I's difficult to separate: 'On the one hand [the traditional novel] alternates the personal and the impersonal very rapidly, often in the course of the same sentence, so as to produce, if we can speak thus, a proprietary consciousness which retains the mastery of what it states without participating in it; and on the other hand, in this type of novel . . . when the narrator is explicitly an "I" . . . there is confusion between the subject (ie origin) of the discourse [*discours*] and the subject of the reported action [*histoire*], as if . . . he who is speaking today were the same as he who acted yesterday' (Barthes in *The Structuralist Controversy*, op cit, p 140). Modernist writers like Barthes himself and the authors he is discussing, such as Philippe Sollers, insist on a clear assumption of the separation between these two instances, refusing the narrative convention that would hide their position as authorial subjects, as writers: 'When I use the sign "I", I refer to myself inasmuch as I am talking: here there is an act which is always new. However, arriving at its destination, this sign is received by my interlocutor as a stable sign, product of a complete code whose contents are recurrent. In other words, the "I" of the one who writes "I" is not the same as the "I" which is read by you' (ibid, p 141).

The hesitation Todorov isolates as central to the system of the fantastic is often mediated through the subjectivity of a character in the diegesis. The reader's uncertainty as to whether what was given in the name of 'I', of experience, was true or not, suspends his decision as to the register to which he is to assign the pronouns representing the narrating subjectivity. This play with the expectation of coming down one way or the other is far from the open assumption of the separation in the modern text. It does, however, constitute the play of pronoun functions as a privileged element of the fantastic as a genre. The thesis that *Vampyr* is a cinematic example of that genre would be greatly strengthened by demonstrating a similar play with pronoun functions within it.

Ben Brewster has argued (*Screen* v 12 n 1, Spring 1971, p 55) that cinematic narrative shares with *histoire* its indifference to the enunciation, to tense and person. Subsequent work by Christian Metz has made possible a different definition of film as a language system (*langage* as opposed to *langue*), allowing one to propose

38 the transference of semiotic figures from one system to another. In this instance we are concerned with a transference of linguistic functions to allow the transference of the narrative code of the fantastic from the literary system to the filmic system. My thesis in this article is that while the change in the matter of expression has changed the disposition of signifiers and signifieds, sufficient similarity is retained to constitute the fantastic as a system common to both matters. The system of linguistic signifiers has been replaced by a system of filmic signifiers spread over a number of cinematic codes. The pronouns of the literary system are transposed into what I suggest are filmic shifters, manifested in the punctuation and the angle of shots, that is, in the codes of multiplicity, motion and mechanical duplication. Whether the functioning of *Vampyr* as a fantastic text can be strictly accounted for in this way as the manifestation of a single code (where 'one can speak in all rigour of one and the same code being manifested in several arts or language systems', Metz: *Language and Cinema*, Mouton, The Hague 1974, p 216), or rather requires the terms of 'distinct, more or less isomorphic codes, each of which is manifested in a different language system' (ibid, p 217), is at present unclear.

I must now define these cinematic pronoun functions more precisely and consider how their distribution in the text of *Vampyr* helps sustain the functioning of the fantastic.

Every narrative film consists of a series of looks of the camera (a continuous mode), which may, through the conventions of subjective camera and reverse field (the point-of-view shot) be doubled with the look of a character in the diegesis. The coding of such conventions by what I call pronoun functions may, however, be displaced by marking the shots as if they pertained to a character in the diegesis and then revealing (by the articulation of surrounding shots) the absence of any such character, that is, by creating 'false' pronouns ('false' only in the sense that they refer to no character in the diegesis – their reference to the organising subject of the discourse constitutes them, as we have seen, as linguistically 'true' pronouns). By means of these 'false' pronouns the presence of the camera, unmediated by character, and by implication the organising subject, are (re-)inscribed into the text.

For the purposes of analysis, I suggest, then, the following functions, corresponding to the phonetically enunciated pronouns 'I', 'you', 'she', 'he', 'it'. Conventional cinematic descriptions are given in ordinary brackets (), and my own notation in square brackets [].

Histoire (impersonal)

'I' – 'first-person' function (subjective shot) [1].

This presents character 'I' (through point of view) without

any intervention of authorial 'I'.

'you' – 'second-person' function

As an instance of *histoire* this is not found in *Vampyr*.

'she' 'he' 'it' – so-called 'third', ie non-person function (descriptive shot) [3].

The impersonal narrating instance.

The first two of these functions are in inverted commas to distinguish them from the corresponding positions in *discours*, where they bear a linguistic mark of person.

The addition of an authorial personal mark displaces these functions from their role in the impersonal mode of *histoire* into instances within *discours*.

Discours

The displaced first person [1d]

The first-person function proper is exhibited when the subjective shot becomes displaced from the character with which it is doubled in the impersonal and is no longer stably attributable to character, the text exhibiting a dialectic between authorial 'I' and character 'I'. This manifestation I call the 'displaced first person'.

The second-person function [2]

The second-person function bears the mark of the author's address to the implicit reader, 'direct address'.

The non-assigned first person [1na]

The non-person cannot be marked with person, so instances of descriptive shots with additional personal marks must be regarded as instance of the authorial 'I', the first-person function, only unmediated by character. I call this the non-assigned first person function to distinguish it from the other manifestation of the linguistic mark of 'I', the displaced first person [1d].

Let us now consider examples of these functions as they occur in the text of *Vampyr*.

Histoire

The 'first-person' function [1] is manifested in what is often referred to as 'subjective camera', that is series of shots where the implicit reader, through identification with a character privileged at that point in the narrative, reads certain shots as subjective, ie as taken from the viewpoint of that character. This corresponds to the classical point-of-view shot as described by Edward Branigan in 'Formal Permutations of the Point-of-View Shot', *Screen* v 16 n 3, Autumn 1975. Most segments of *Vampyr* contain no clear instances of this function, and the few that do, privileged by this very-infrequency, occur at important moments in the elaboration of the film's semantic system. One such segment is that in which Gray, exploring, meets the doctor for the first

40 time (Shots 94-96). There are alternating shots of Gray and the doctor, with matching eyelines. This first occurrence of the pronoun function in the film marks the scene as the first 'meeting', according to the literary convention (eg in Donne) that intersection of eyebeams signifies the meeting of souls. (This exchange with the doctor is overdetermined by a number of significations: the doctor is the main agent of the vampires – his hypnotic look will later trap Gray; their verbal exchange about whether they hear the sound of a dog or a child is contradictory – Gray asserts he hears both, the doctor neither, and the film's sound track has only dog-like noises; and the exchange of looks also functions in the context as a test of truth, it being conventional wisdom that liars deflect their gaze, the outcome of the test being precisely uncertainty on the reader's part as to what the diegetic reality is.)

What is often called the 'descriptive shot' is characterised by the presence of the impersonal narrating instance [3]. For example, at the beginning of *Vampyr*, the opening title (Shot 1) refers to David Gray going to 'the inn which is by the river'. There follows Shot 2, a medium shot of the river bank with Gray entering screen right carrying fishing rods, and exiting towards camera; and Shot 3, a close-up of the 'Hotel' sign silhouetted against the sky. These two shots combine to illustrate the action described in Shot 1. There are other instances of this pronoun function which do not have the graphic support (the words of the intertitle), for example, the alternating series (Shots 9-15) describing, through the convention of parallel montage, the simultaneous actions of the reaper at the ferry and Gray entering the inn. The pages of the book (black script on white paper, with roller caption movement more marked than the intertitles, which have white script on black) can also be regarded as examples of the impersonal narrating instance – 'This is what is read'. However, the book can also be read as in the imperative mood (ie second person) – 'read this!' or 'This is what you the reader read', or (at times) as displaced point-of-view of Gray or the domestic reading the book. This polysemy can create uncertainty as to how a shot is to be read and as such sustains the fantastic.

Discours

Second-person function [2] occurs in two titles (Shots 27 and 53). While most of the titles in the film function in a purely descriptive impersonal mode, these two directly address the reader, ie present questions to the implicit reader using written language.

Displaced first-person function [1d] is exemplified by Gray's encounters with the girl at the inn and with the father (before his meeting with the doctor). These sequences are marked by eyeline mismatching, signifying a lack of 'meeting', a blocking of the exchange of looks.

Non-assigned first-person function [1na] is found in the many instances where one or a series of shots is coded as 'first person', but this codification is then revealed to be false, the camera appearing to act as an independent observer. When Gray arrives outside the inn (Shot 5), there is a medium shot of the roof, then a pan left over the roof and down to reveal Gray standing outside the door. His look up, off screen, in Shot 4 and the initial part of the pan in Shot 5 suggest the point-of-view structure [1], but since by the end of the shot Gray is in frame, a different reading is suggested, that of the camera/author observing Gray. Parrain's hypothesis that such shots are from the point of view of spirits observing the action seems unjustified in that they are never assigned to any character in the diegesis, spirit or flesh. Branigan (op cit, p 61) uses these shots as an example of the undermining of the closed point of view, illustrating 'a structural principle of the film whereby the camera is unable to "keep up" with the events (ie it is not omniscient)'. This structural principle is of course that of the fantastic genre. (By formulating the point-of-view structure as usually composed of two shots articulated by a cut, Branigan makes the existence of the point-of-view structure in a single shot – as in Shot 80 – difficult to account for, an instance of the tendency for criticism to take the shot, rather than the duration of an interplay of codes, as the minimum narrative unit, because of its convenience in textual analysis.)

In some of Ozu's films there are close-ups functioning as impersonal 'descriptive' shots [3], but there are also those details of a domestic environment which Noël Burch has called 'pillow shots', where the holding of an impersonally coded shot for a long time causes it to acquire strong connotations of individual style and diegetic superfluity, thus constituting it as an instance of the non-assigned first person [1na]. In considering close-ups one could also instance the examples in Hitchcock of close-ups strictly addressed to the implicit reader, and impossible to assign to a character in the diegesis. In the terms of my analysis, these function polysemically, being coded both as second person [2] (the address to the reader) and as impersonal [3] (their descriptive element). One might want to argue for an additional second-person coding for the Ozu example.

As a problematic close-up in *Vampyr* one might instance Shot 49, where the shot of the package inscribed 'To be opened after my death' breaks into a sequence of alternating displaced 'subjective' shots [1d] between Gray and the father. Neither of the two characters is so positioned in previous shots as to constitute this as possibly either of them's point of view – only the audience can 'read' it. Although clearly addressed to the audience (and as such an instance of the second person [2]), one could also argue for the coding of displaced first person [1d] which predominates in the scene as a whole.

42 These filmic shifters must be seen as a system functioning throughout the film and affected by it. As Metz points out (*Language and Cinema*, op cit, p 213), one must distinguish between the *treatment* a code receives as the result of the work of the other codes and the code itself. It is part of the system of the fantastic to create 'polysemic', uncertain codings, in this instance as to whether the package is seen by Gray [1d] or by the reader alone [2]. The reading of any shot will depend on the movements of the codes already in play, not on any hypostasised function gained from analysis of single frames separated from the flow of the film. In particular, the tendency for the narrative to balance, to exhibit a kind of homeostasis traversed by a tendency to run down, works at the level of the shots (alternating systems – usually Gray/non-Gray) over and above the demands of point of view to create a field of possibilities-probabilities within which the filmic shifters have to function. In this instance, the strict alternation Gray/non-Gray, with its accompanying alternation of pronoun functions, means that for the shot in question an expected coding [1d] is already established by the alternations of previous shots.

III Tabulation

In my work on *Vampyr* I have prepared a complete shot-by-shot analysis of the film text, but since it is only practicable to refer in detail to a few segments, these have been chosen to illustrate the structure of the fantastic text and the pronoun functions, and also to comment on problems of interpretation in the practice of the analysis.

In order to present some account of this work in relation to the text as a whole, and to ensure that the detailed analyses may be seen in context, I shall first consider the results of a segmental analysis of the whole film on the basis of Christian Metz's 'Grande Syntagmatique' (see *Film Language: a Semiotics of the Cinema*, London and New York 1974, pp 124ff), the only rigorous model available for the investigation of the cinematic code organising the spatio-temporal order of the sequence. The results show that, apart from Autonomous Shots (which are all diegetic or non-diegetic inserts), three of the syntagmatic units defined by Metz are present in *Vampyr*: Alternating Syntagm, Sequence and Scene. These categories only apply to some half of the segments of the film (25 out of a total of 39). The other segments fall into two classes, which could be designated Alternating Syntagm/Sequence (seven segments) and Sequence/Scene (seven segments). These classes cut across the distinctions Metz makes within narrative syntagms between one or several linear times, continuous or dis-

continuous sequentiality and organised or non-organised continuity. The strict applicability of Metz's model is restricted to the 'classical' film after 1935, that is, once the disruptive effect of the introduction of sound into the silent system had been absorbed, reinforcing the cinema's project of spatio-temporal continuity. *Vampyr* was shot in 1930 and premièred in May 1932. Sundry versions in French, German and possibly English were made, as well as a silent version 'prepared with the greatest of care, so that it should not only be on a par with the talking version but also equal through its technical construction to the best silent films of the period preceding the arrival of the talking film' (*Close Up* v 8, 1931, p 50). In other words, *Vampyr* is very much a transitional film, and it is thus not surprising that Metz's classification is not completely pertinent to it. But over and above this transitional character, the articulation of spatio-temporal coherence, so important for the texts Metz is concerned with, is marked in the fantastic text as incoherent, uncertain.

The segmentation also confirms the central role of David Gray in the diegesis. He is present in most of the segments (31 out of 39), and in the majority of these (24 out of 31) his look alone is articulated between shots (the only significant exceptions being five instances where Gray exchanges looks, ie both looks and is the object of someone else's look, once with the father and Gisèle, three times with the doctor). Of the eight segments from which Gray is absent, five privilege the look of another character (the domestic and Gisèle once each, the doctor three times). There is a constant level of additional personal marks (only four segments are apparently free of them) non-assigned to characters in the diegesis, undermining the articulation of Gray's look and asserting the look of the camera unmediated by character. This 'disruption' of eyeline matching and the exchange of looks is used to create uncertain spatio-temporal relationships in the film, and by implication, the reader. Of the four segments free of this authorial intervention, I regard only one, the final segment, as significant. According to the logic of classical narratives (those not completely reversible, as is the modern plural text according to Barthes in *S/Z*, London 1975, p 13), the contradictions in the text must finally be felt to have been resolved in (apparent) harmony, a lack of disruption, closure. Hence the adoption of an ending to *Vampyr* accepting more conventionalised rules of editing, closing the work with an impression of 'smoothness', spatio-temporal continuity.

The following tables show the distribution of pronoun functions within some of the segments of the film already referred to. The accompanying text gives a brief description of the diegesis for each segment and comments on the coding as to pronoun function in the context of the articulation of the series of shots of that segment and the system of the fantastic. The stills are intended

44 as no more than an *aide-mémoire* to the reading; my theses should of course be checked against the film itself.

The notation used for the pronoun functions has been explained above. When more than one coding is present in a shot, both are noted in their order of appearance; thus 3,1na means an authorial intrusion during an impersonal shot, or rather a shot that began as impersonal. Apparently contradictory codings are separated by an oblique stroke thus: 3/1na. The tables present the codings as to pronoun functions along two or more axes according to whether the shots contain a dominant character, usually Gray, or not. As well as making them more legible, this allows the tables to present an aspect of the filmic system already referred to in passing, namely a tendency to balance, in this case at the level of the series of individual shots. Shots additional to those in the print described by Buzzi and Lattuada are marked with a dash: thus shot 365' occurs in the National Film Archive print between shots 365 and 366 as numbered by Buzzi and Lattuada.

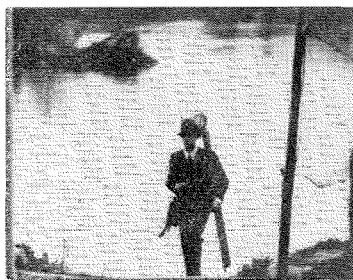
Table 1 The Opening Segments, Shots 1-27

Shot Number	Gray	non-Gray
1		3 intertitle

Autonomous Shot, non-diegetic insert. First intertitle.

This shot has already been referred to above as introducing Gray and the terms of vision and imagination as central to his character and to the problematic of the fantastic, and as an example of the impersonal narrating instance [3].

Shot Number	Gray	non-Gray
2	3	
3		1, 3 hotel sign



2



3

4
5

3, 1na

1, 1na
the inn → G

4



5a



5b



5c

6

1
girl's head at window

7

3
outside bar,
looking right

8

1
reaper

Sequence. Gray approaches the inn, knocks (Shot 4), and sees a man carrying a scythe (Shot 8) whom I shall call 'the reaper'.

We have already considered Shots 2 and 3 as examples of the impersonal narrating instance [3] illustrating the text of the inter-title, Shot 1. In addition to being marked as impersonal, Shot 3 is marked as 'being read' [1] by a downward reframing, and by Gray's position in the previous shot, exiting towards camera, which would permit a point-of-view structure with the hotel sign of Shot 3 as the object of Gray's look. The placing of the camera within the building in Shot 4 and its movement forward towards the door at which Gray is knocking suggest a double coding, both impersonal, descriptive [3], and personal [1na] – as a look not assigned to character. Shot 5 has already been referred to as an instance of a personal coding [1] then revealed as non-assigned

46 [1na], the arrow in the table indicating that the shot begins without Gray (the roof of the inn) but then includes him. Shot 3 is the first instance of ambiguous coding [1, 3] in the film. Shot 4 has the first irruption of *discours* in its insistence on the role of the camera unmediated by character. This is repeated in Shot 5, where we are confused as to whether we see what Gray sees or our perception is independent of his. This uncertainty about our position in relation to Gray, whether the camera's look will be doubled by Gray's or not, establishes a major figure of the text's functioning, the problem of the relationship of our vision to Gray's.

Shot Number	Gray	non-Gray
8		1 reaper
9	3	
10		3 reaper
11	3	
12		3 reaper
13	3	
14		3 reaper
15	3	
16		1d, 1na girl closing door
17	3	
18		1d reaper
19	3	
20		1d reaper
21	3 with etching	
22		1 etching (close-up)

Sequence (with non-diegetic inserts)/Alternating Syntagm. The girl comes to the bar (Shot 9), lets Gray into the inn (Shot 11), he enters the hall (Shot 13) followed by the girl who shows him to his room (Shot 15). Shots of the reaper (10, 12, 14) alternate with these shots. Looking outside from his room Gray sees the reaper approach the ferry (Shots 18, 20). He then examines an etching of death on the wall.

The connotations of death, one of the thematic concerns of the fantastic, are reinforced in this segment by the parallel actions of Gray and the reaper, whom we see approaching the ferry independently of Gray inside the inn being shown to his room.

Shot from approximately the same camera angle in relation to the subject, the shots of the reaper get progressively closer, the closest (Shot 20), showing him at the ferry, being followed by the etching, so that all the non-Gray shots except one (Shot 16) in this segment have connotations of death. I have indicated the uncertainty about the diegetic status of these shots of the reaper – do they have a symbolic, non-diegetic function, or rather represent a diegetic element separate from Gray's actions? – by giving this segment an ambiguous Metzian syntagmatic coding. The presence of the camera as an independent observer is marked in Shot 16, where the girl is seen from an angle quite different from that required for a point of view from Gray's position in the previous shot, and again in Shots 18 and 20, where the shots of the reaper are displaced from the angle necessary for them to function unambiguously as Gray's point of view from the window. In this segment, the relation between the camera's look and Gray's is marked as uncertain as a result of the intervention of *discours*, a figure repeated throughout the film.

Shot Number	Gray	non-Gray
23	3	
24	3	
25		1 man with deformed face
26	3, 1na/2	
27		2 intertitle

Scene. Gray hears a sound of muttering, investigates, meeting a man with a deformed face, retreats to his room, locking the door, the camera moving in to a close-up of Gray's hand (Shot 26) as he locks it, suggesting the additional coding of the look of the camera [1na] or direct address [2].

The text has adopted one of the elements of the fantastic: narration through the central character, Gray, and a disruption of that narration by the foregrounding of the authorial look of the camera. The first-person coding on which this narration depends is usually ambiguous, as can be seen from the table (the predominance of *histoire* [3, 1] with several interventions of *discours* [1d, 1na, 2]); character 'I', continuity of character point of view, is continually inflected and confused with authorial 'I', with *discours*. In addition the text has presented a diegetic world with contradictory connotations (is it the world of the living or the world of the dead?). The subsequent section introduces another element of the fantastic by creating uncertainty as to whether what happens to Gray is real or not, whether Gray is visited by a living person or a ghost.

48 Table 2 The Father's Visit, Shots 28-53

Shot Number	Gray	non-Gray
28		3, 1na hotel sign

Autonomous Shot. The hotel sign.

This shot functions as an explanatory insert, recalling that the action still occurs at the inn. This function is in a sense superfluous, since we have been given no reason to assume any change of place in the action. The framing, excluding the word 'Hotel', gives the shot an emblematic quality, with connotations of victory (the wreath, the palms) and death. The redundancy of this shot is noted in the mark of *discours* [1na] attributed to it in addition to the impersonal coding [3].

Shot Number	Gray	non-Gray
29	3	
30		1d, 1na key turning (close-up)
31	3	
32		1d, 1na door opens, light changes
33	1d	
34		1d father enters
35	1	



34



35

36		1d father
37	1d, 1na	
38		1 father
39	1na, 1d	
40		1 father

41 1na, 1d

42

1
father

43 1na

44

1
father

45 1na, 1d

46

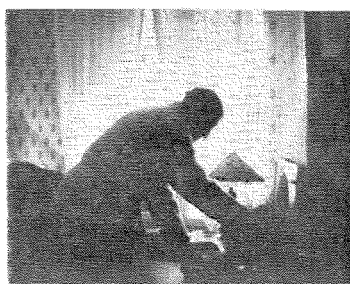
1d
father

47 1na

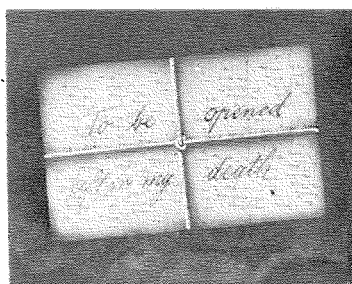
48

1
father

49 1na/2
parcel (close-up
insert)



48



49

50

3, 1
father leaves, light changes

51 3

52 3

Scene. Gray lies in bed, the key turns of its own accord in the lock and the person we later learn to be the father enters, leaving the parcel inscribed with the words 'To be opened after my death'. Gray asks with staring eyes 'Who are you?' being met with the reply, 'Quiet. . . . She must not die. Do you hear, she must not die.'

The uncertainty of the diegetic reality of this segment is marked in a number of ways. The key's turning (Shot 30) and the lighting round the door which changes before the father enters and is then restored when he leaves are both cues suggesting the supernatural, since the preceding intertitle has stated that Gray remains awake. While the organisation of the alternating shots of Gray and the father could have suggested spatio-temporal continuity, a continuation of the coding of the supernatural, this is systematically undermined by the displacement of these looks by *discours*, also present in the close-ups of the key in the door and the parcel.

- 50 While the father is the object of both Gray's and our looks, the return of his gaze is, as it were, reappropriated by *discours*: the shots of Gray which might, because of the system Gray/non-Gray, be from the father's position are strongly marked by *discours*, the insistence of the place of the camera. This interaction is placed outside that convention of alternating looks which would enable the events to be read as 'real'. The articulation of successive shots in this segment creates uncertainty – is it part of the text that ghosts are real, or is this perhaps a dream?

Shot Number	Gray	non-Gray
53		2 intertitle

Autonomous Shot, non-diegetic insert. Intertitle: 'Is it a ghost or a dream or some poor creature seeking his help?'

The text of the title precisely re-marks the real/supernatural hesitation already noted in the previous segment.

Table 3 The Father's Death, Shots 135-164

Shot Number	Father	Gray and Domestic	Gisèle and others
135	1na, 3		
136	3		
137		3 Gray and domestic	
138	1na		
139			1na servant at stairs
140	1na		
141			3 nun in corridor
142	3		
143		1na Gray	
144			3 domestic's wife and Jeanne with lamps
145	3, 1		
146			3 nurse and Gisèle at stairs
147		3 domestic	

148

1na, 1d.
Gisèle enters room

51

149

1na

150

1na
domestic

151

1na

152

1na, 1d
domestic and Gisèle

153

1na, 1d

154

1na, 1d
Gisèle

155

3

156

1na
Gray



145



154



155



156

157

3

158

1na
domestic, his
wife and Jeanne

159

3

160

3
domestic's wife
and Gisèle

161

3

162

3
domestic's wife
and Gisèle

Sequence/Alternating Syntagm. Gray and the domestic reach the father, help him to rest on a cushion (Shot 138), other servants and his daughter Gisèle arrive from different parts of the chateau, he dies (Shot 159) and is carried to another room (Shot 163).

This segment can be divided into two sections: first, the tail-end of a series of movements on the part of Gray and the domestic to save the father, opposed to shots of his being shot and falling to the ground (Shots 121-138); second, alternating shots of the father and the actions around him (servants running downstairs – Shot 139 – along a corridor – Shot 141 – Gray feeding him some liquid from a cup – Shot 143 – etc). Both series are organised round shots of the father, from 139-161 close-ups of his face contrasting with the many different alternating (non-father) shots. One shot near the middle of the segment (145), more of a medium shot than earlier ones and conventionally designable as an establishing shot signifying a single diegetic space, anchors the previous shots where the intervention of *discours* had signified spatio-temporal incoherence. This anchorage is then undermined by the rest of the segment in a series of violent disruptions (Shots 148-154) involving 180-degree change in angle of shot. This especially confuses the relative positions of Gray, Gisèle, the domestic and the father, creating a kind of equivalence between Gray, Gisèle and her father (the last gives a silver heart to Gisèle – Shot 154: Gisèle; 155: father placing the heart in a hand; 156: Gray – but the organisation of the shot angles and their sequence suggests he gives it to Gray). This disruption of spatio-temporal continuity in the scene of the father's death precedes Gray's adoption of a more passive role in the narrative. Gray inherits the heart, the place of the father, establishing him as a son, barred from access to Gisèle by the ban on incest (the same images establish her in the role of 'sister' to Gray). Only after he has been partially relieved of this filial role, it being taken over by the domestic, does Gray again participate in the action, helping the latter and rescuing Gisèle. My analysis is particularly concerned in this segment with the lack of shots of Gray and the frequency and systematicity of the privileging of the father. The point-of-view structures are inserted into the impersonal mode [3], mainly as interventions of *discours* which undermine that coding, making it difficult to read, creating uncertainty in the reader as to what is going on, how the different characters are related in space, what relations the film establishes between them. This creation of uncertainty in the reader independently of Gray's perceptions is, I suggest, an equivalent of the use of the narrator's discourse to

lie in the literary fantastic. Yet it is also, because of our predominant identification with Gray throughout the film, a kind of equivalent of his own confusion, as it were displaced on to the syntagmatic organisation of the film, on to the organisation of personal marks. This scene of the father's death reveals semantic elements of that confusion: What is Gray's role? He is almost excluded from it, the domestic having equal prominence, a prefiguration of the latter's usurpation of the function of hero (reading the book to its conclusions and putting these into practice, driving the stake through the vampire's heart) and Gray's relegation to an auxiliary role. It also indicates confusion as to sexual roles, the 'equation' of Gray and Gisèle already referred to. 53

Table 4 Gray's 'Dream' in the Park, Shots 318-381

Shot Number	Gray	non-Gray
318	3	



318

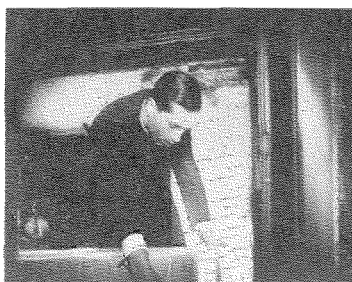
319		3 sky
320	3	
321		3 sky
322	3	

Sequence. Gray's image splits (Shot 318), one shadow running through the Park (Shot 320) to a building (Shot 322). These shots alternate with shots of the night sky.

The shots of the sky function as reference to time ('it was night') and incidentally as a series with other shots of the sky throughout the film. Their connective function in the narrative is reflected in the impersonal coding.

Shot Number	Gray	non-Gray
323	3	

54	324		1na, 1 coffin
	325	3	
	326		1d coffin lid and inscription
	327	3	
	328	1na coffin head right	
	329		1na, 1d Gray' in coffin head top left



328



329

330	3 coffin head right	
331		1 na Gray' in coffin head top right
332	3 camera in position of corpse	
333		1 doorway
334	3	
335	3 looking through glass	
336		1, 1na Gisèle
337	3	
338	3	

Scene. Gray enters the building, kneels by a coffin (Shot 328), pulling back the cloth covering it (Shot 329) to show his own

body in the coffin (noted as Gray'). Shot 331 shows Gray looking 55
down at his own body (both are in shot together, the shot being
taken over Gray's shoulder looking down at the coffin). There
are 180-degree cuts between Shots 328 and 329 and Shots 330
and 331, noted as interventions of discours [1na]. In Shot 332,
Gray looks up, his look providing the link with Shot 333 of a door.
In Shot 334, Gray walks towards this door, and through a glass
panel in it sees Gisèle tied up (Shot 336). He is unable to open the
door (Shot 337).

Where pronoun functions and their articulation of point of view
are concerned, we should note in this segment that at Shot 332
the camera is more or less in the position of the 'corpse', an
anticipation of later segments, and that several shots, 324, 336
and 339, are ambiguous as to whether they present Gray's or the
camera's point of view. The discovery of the body in the coffin,
like the discovery of Gisèle, is accompanied by interventions of
discours, and the 180-degree cuts around the coffin recall the
death of the father (Table 3).

Shot Number	Gray	non-Gray
339		3 doctor
340	3, 1d	
341	3	
342		3 doctor enters
343	3	
344		1d doctor removes key
345		1na steps (close-up)
346		1 doctor
347	3	
348		3

Sequence. The doctor enters the building (Shot 339). Continuity
of angles in cutting suggests that Gray is in a position (Shot 340)
to see the doctor, but from the next shot (341) it is clear that
he is not. Gray moves to another room (as if in reaction to the
doctor's entry) and establishes himself in a position (Shot 343)
to observe the action of the doctor picking up a key to the glass-
fronted door, behind which we have seen Gisèle tied up. This is
a displaced point-of-view shot [1d]. Shot 345, a slightly panning
close-up of a few steps, strongly marks the camera's presence. The
doctor does not open the door but replaces the key (Shot 346).
Gray observing the action (Shot 347) withdraws behind the door
jamb. The corporal comes from the stairway and carries tools to

56 the foreground, obscuring our view of the doctor as he does so (Shot 348).

The hesitating narrative coherence of this scene is constituted by the now familiar procedure of displaced subjective shots marking Gray's observing look. In this instance they link together two actions (the doctor's entry, Gray's movement about the room) which are not initially linked, a moment of diegetic 'falsity'. A lie is told by the camera, then 'corrected' by the subjective coding. [1d] (Shot 344), then undermined again by the further intervention of *discours* [1na] (Shot 345) etc – a constant dialectic of the film's process.

Shot Number	Gray	non-Gray
349	1na	
350		3
351	3	

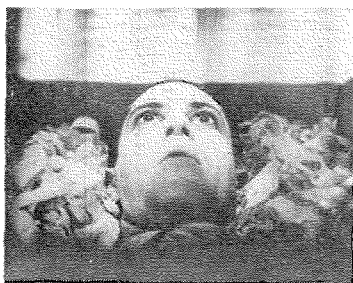
Sequence/Scene. The above sequence is broken by a shot (349) of a room with woodshavings on the floor. Gray runs in and climbs under a trapdoor in the foreground. A shot of the corporal going through a doorway, possibly the one Gray was observing in Shot 347 (Shot 350) is followed by a return to Gray looking from under the raised trapdoor, his image now having regained solidity; the corporal's leg enters the doorway, a link with the next shot.

The woodshavings, trapdoor and camera set-up of Shot 349 link this space to that of Gray's earlier exploration (Shot 84). Shot 351 sets Gray up in the position of observer, yet the expected return to his look is first delayed by shots of the doctor and then completely overturned by the POV shots from the coffin (see below).

Shot Number	Gray's Corpse	Doctor	Other
352			1 corporal bending
353		3	
354			1na coverlet rolled back
355		3	
356			1d
357		3	
358			1na corporal puts lid on coffin (corpse's view)
359	3		



358



359

360

3

361

31d
corporal picks up
brace

362

3

363

1

corporal turns brace

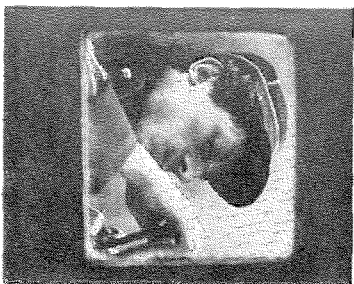
364

3

365

1

old woman



363



364



365

365

3

366

3

with bearers

58

367 3
368 3
369

1
shadows on ceiling

370 3
371

1
shadows on ceiling

372 3
373 1



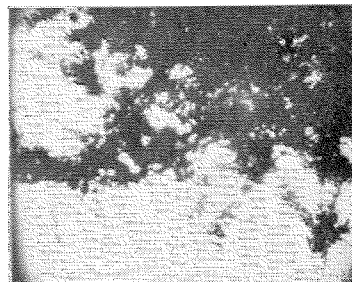
372



373a



373b



373c

374 3
375

ina
pan up
church tower

376 3



375



376



377

378 3

379 1

380 3

381 3



381a



381b

Scene/Sequence. The corporal bends to pick up tools (Shot 352), the doctor lights a cigar (Shot 353), and the corporal comes in behind him and begins removing the coverlet of the coffin (Shot 354). The doctor observes (Shots 355 and 357) while the corporal picks up the coffin lid (Shot 356) and puts it on the coffin (Shot 358). Watched by Gray' in the coffin, the corporal makes holes in it and then hammers nails in. The old woman looks into the coffin (Shot 365) which is picked up by some bearers (only seen in this segment) and carried out to the churchyard, this being observed by Gray' in the coffin. In Shot 381, observed by Gray's two images, the cortège vanishes as the church bells stop tolling. Gray's 'doubles' merge into one solid image again.

This segment is organised around, ie constantly returns to, shots of Gray's body in the coffin, all of which are from points of view taken up by the camera separately from characters. The first shot of the segment is marked as Gray's point of view (Shot 352). The next breaks with the alternation Gray/non-Gray which might have

60 been continued (Shot 351: Gray; 352: non-Gray, etc). Instead, Shot 353 is an impersonal shot inaugurating a series doctor/non-doctor, shots of the doctor alternating with shots of what the doctor sees. This makes possible the shock of Shot 358, which breaks into the series, substituting for the expected shot from the point of view of the doctor a shot of Gray's 'corpse' in the coffin. Shot 359 indicates that this non-assigned point of view must be that of the 'corpse'. During the interval when Gray's point of view has been replaced by the doctor's, we can only assume that Gray's shadow, hitherto an observer of the action, has become trapped in the body in the coffin. Following this there is a series of shots in which we see Gray looking out of the coffin, his eyes staring, alternating with shots of what he 'sees'. The shock of the transition in point of view, its continuation (there is no further reference to Gray observing the action from the trap-door), is increased by the gliding motion of the camera, so clearly marking the shots as subjective that it is as if all the previous displacements of subjective shots existed to contrast with this matching of seer and seen. The continuity of action is maintained from the room to the church, yet the interruption at Shot 375 (a pan up the church tower, which like Shot 345 of the steps provides an alternative axis – that of the camera – to that of Gray's subjectivity for reading the segment) prevents this movement from coming to represent the narrative's approach to resolution, the point of equilibrium. Instead the camera's independence is re-marked and the disturbance leads to other attempts at resolution. Shot 358 and the series that follows it also function as the conclusion of a series of previous shots of shadows and shots taken from 'strange' angles in relation to character point of view (eg Shot 127 of the shooting of the father). These stylistic 'pre-figurations' have accumulated the effect of uncertainty and the sum of that uncertainty produced by the displacements is discharged at this moment in the narrative, producing the effect of shock.

IV Serial or Fantastic?

'I never succeed in defining literary history independently of what time has added to it. In other words, I always give it a mythical dimension. For me, Romanticism includes everything that has been said about Romanticism' (Roland Barthes in *The Structuralist Controversy*, op cit, p 150).

Critical discourse is 'about' both the textual object proper and also the other discourses added to it through history. In my discussion of *Vampyr* I have considered some examples of criticism

as failing through their lack of Todorov's conception of the fantastic, but I have not so far mentioned perhaps the most important instance, the article 'Propositions' by Noël Burch and Jorge Dana in *Afterimage* n 5, Spring 1974, pp 40-66. This article places *Vampyr* within a cinematic *politique* which deserves a more serious consideration both in terms of the theoretical issues raised and of their effects in educational practices than can be given here. Nevertheless, an outline of it is necessary in order to understand how *Vampyr* fits in.

The *politique* is based on an opposition which Burch and Dana find in the work of Umberto Eco between the structural and the serial, the structural referring to a notion of codedness, socialised meaning, the serial to 'the negation of socialised meaning, above and beyond the simple ambiguity of the aesthetic message' produced when the codes are 'set in crisis'. They argue that this area of the serial is manifested in a redistribution of signifiers in certain films homologous with procedures in other arts such as serial music where 'series is no longer the negation of structure, but structure questioning itself and recognising itself as part of history' (Eco: *La Struttura assente*, cit *Afterimage* n 5, op cit, p 42). This discourse of the serial 'questioning and recognising itself' is manifested in a series of films, a 'crest line': *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, *Potemkin*, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, *L'Argent*, *M*, *Man with a Movie Camera*, *Vampyr* and *Gertrud*. The three works by Dreyer are present not as products of a cinematic auteur, but as instances of an exemplary textual practice, a kind of dialectical 'uplifting' (*Aufhebung*) from the level of the structural to that of the serial: 'In Dreyer in particular, it is very evident that it is through montage itself that the codes of montage are deconstructed.' This dynamic of the serial constitutes it as textual, materialist, as a work of deconstruction.

In order to situate their 'crest line', Burch and Dana present a taxonomy of four categories in terms of the degree to which films 'escape the ideological determinations of the codes', the degree to which the signifier escapes being 'flattened under the tyrannical weight of the signified':

Category A consists of 'films totally accounted for and informed at all levels by the dominant codes', the domain of 'true "transparence", ideological expression in its pure state'. Much of Hollywood is included here, examples being Minnelli and the American work of Lang (*The Secret Behind the Door*).

Category B consists of films 'totally accounted for by the codes, but in which this fact is marked by a Stylistic'. This includes the 'staples of the art cinemas', films marked by an author but in a manner which does not allow the texts to accede to 'genuine Form, "textuality"'. (This opposition between Stylistic and Form is a version of the 1950's *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics' opposition between *metteurs-en-scène* and *auteurs*.)

62 In Category C are films which achieve intermittent access to Form, films which 'intermittently escape the dominant ideological determination of the codes' but also contain 'passages where the codes incontestably resume their hegemony'. *L'Argent* and *Potemkin* belong to this category.

Category D is characterised by the absence of this hegemony of the codes, containing films 'informed by a constant designation/deconstruction of the codes which, however ideologically determined at the strictly diegetic level, implicitly question this determination by the way they situate the codes and play upon them'.

Films of the 'crest line' fall into both C and D. Thus *Gertrud* is classified as belonging to C, *Vampyr* to D. However, it is hard to see the difference between these classifications in the accounts of the two films the authors give.

Burch and Dana's notion of an extra-codic area may have value in opposing scientific extensions of semiotics, but in suggesting the possibility of signification without codification it can only create confusion. The article's reference to an effective liberation of the signifier from the signified is reminiscent of the exclusive concern with the signifier evidenced by avant-garde film-making and criticism, particularly in America (as Peter Wollen has outlined in an article in *Screen* v 17 n 1, Spring 1976), and Burch and Dana tend towards a similar elision of the difference between the concepts of material and (dialectical) materialism. They demand serious consideration, however, because their vocabulary – signifier, signified, materialist, deconstruction, modernism, etc – overlaps in a constellation of terms with that present in *Screen's* discourse. Just as this vocabulary is contaminated by its juxtaposition with traditional aestheticising notions such as 'Form', the crest line they propose creates confusion in that while containing some arguably modernist 'textual' and materialist works (such as *Man with a Movie Camera*) it includes films which would more aptly be assigned to what is conventionally called the 'art cinema'. While I would not deny the influence of avant-garde practices on Dreyer's work, I would maintain that his films function in quite other ways than those Burch and Dana suggest and in particular that the 'textuality' they refer to in the case of *Vampyr* is a product of an interplay of the codes of the fantastic and the author, such that the film quite clearly situates itself within a particular and not especially progressive mode of production and consumption of cinematic meanings. Their *politique* has value in championing certain contemporary textual practices in cinema and in directing our attention to 'neglected' works of the past, but as an account of film history it is quite inadequate. There is no attempt to place these texts in relation to the combination of ideological, political and economic determinations which could constitute a history. Their position also assumes too homogeneous a hegemonic role

for dominant film-making practices, an identification of the theoretical model of the classical realist text with the whole of Hollywood-Mosfilm's cinematic production, to use Godard's phrase.

Burch and Dana consider *Vampyr* to be a work 'whose "textual" depth – the consequence of a persistent deconstruction directed against the set of codes brought into play (most of which had scarcely been the object of any such previous critique) – is almost unique today'. When they write, vis-à-vis *Gertrud*, of Dreyer adopting a Brechtian attitude towards the text, everything contributing to 'stripping, relieving it of its dramaturgical charge, revealing all the "strings" which hold it together' and a mode of delivery by the characters 'almost completely devoid of any expressive modulation, which is the source of [this] extreme alienation', they underline the formalism inherent in their position which, as Colin MacCabe has pointed out (*Screen* v 16 n 4, Winter 1975/6, pp 46-57), in stressing the moment of separation in fact ignores the politics of that moment, that in order to work within representation to produce an understanding of its formations, the text must enable the audience to separate themselves from an identity given in the text, to participate in a learning process. The function of the audience in Burch and Dana's discourse is as problematic as that of history. Deconstruction can only occur within representation (hence the concept of counter-cinema), and only through a displacement of meanings by other meanings.

Vampyr's exemplary, self-consciously polemical features, its system of 'deconstruction', are considered by Burch and Dana under three heads:

1. The film is seen as 'revealing, or questioning the already traditional dichotomy between the "subjective" camera and the "objective" camera by introducing a third term – the camera designated as an omnipotent and omniscient presence which defines or unmasks the other two attitudes as roles'. One of the structural axes of the film is constituted for them by the trace left by the successive passage from one to another among these three 'roles'. I would read this 'third term' as a function of the systems of the fantastic and authorial discourse. The force of 'defines or unmasks . . . as roles' does not convey that play with subjective and objective camera necessitated by the systems of fantastic and author. (To characterise the 'third term' as 'omnipotent and omniscient', ie as imaginary in the psychoanalytic sense, misses its possible symbolic function and its instability in this film text, foreclosing access to the symbolic – a point I hope to develop in later work.)

2. The second structural axis is the 'use of cross-cutting, showing the relativity of established codification by producing a whole series of messages ambiguous as to temporal simultaneity/causality'. Now the production of such messages, in my reading, is precisely the function of the fantastic. Although cross-cutting is

64 important in establishing our perception independently of Gray's, it is not the main source of ambiguous messages, which is rather the use of pronoun functions already elaborated. ('Established codification' really demands more study of the codes of silent film than the authors perform, and without it we are not in a position to distinguish at what points *Vampyr* is innovatory in relation to 'established codification'.)

3. The film is seen as attacking the non-specific codes in a systematic way: 'The rules of the genre [of vampire movies] are subjected to permutation and transformation.' Any sense of play with rules should be taken rather as part of the process by which genres are established and which later films, constituting most of the generic corpus, only partially explore. One of Burch and Dana's examples, the fact that the element 'vampires fear the light of day' occurs reversed in the film, confuses the profilmic event, in which light is used to create shadows, and the text, in which the convention of 'day for night' is in operation. The shadows in the film are not asserted to be vampires anyway, so whether they are shown in the light or seen reflected in water is irrelevant; the only 'shadow' with a clear diegetic function is that of the corporal, who is, along with the doctor, an accomplice of the vampire Marguerite Chopin. As we know from other examples, for example Renfield's sea voyage in Browning's *Dracula*, accomplices are not subject to the same constraints as vampires themselves, they can 'cross flowing water', do not 'fear the light of the sun' etc. Burch and Dana also cite the fact that in the doctor's house a door blows open 'of its own accord just as the vampire emerges . . . through another door!'. In fact the passage through which she enters is established in another sequence (Shot 92), and this use of the unexpected is in no way unique: in *Nosferatu*, for example, the vampire's entry into Harker's room is preceded by a door opening of its own accord and the vampire appearing a relatively long time afterwards – the denial of expectation is the same as in the *Vampyr* example (the expected appearance behind the door withheld), and in the latter the door's opening can be attributed to the wind. Moreover, the fact that the vampire 'appears' to enter through a wall could be said to reinforce a constant reference in *Vampyr* to the operation of some more general malign force than Marguerite Chopin herself, as when the door of the doctor's room becomes locked preventing the corporal's escape, or the doctor's disappearance from the chateau is accompanied by doors banging and lights flickering in the wind as he appears to pass through the window, the *locus classicus* for vampiric entrances and exits. At most this last example exhibits on the diegetic plane another manifestation of uncertainty, namely, are the vampire's accomplices vampires or not? All these examples could only have the force Burch and Dana give them if a generic norm were established for a body of texts belonging to a 'vampire' genre. They could then be assessed as to their degree

of transgression of the norm and that transgression interpreted. It should be emphasised that a certain degree of transgression may be necessary for the maintenance of a genre: 'Every work modifies the sum of possible works, each new example alters the species', as Todorov puts it (*The Fantastic*, op cit, p 6). It appears more fruitful to examine *Vampyr* as I have done as an example of the genre of the fantastic, one little used in the cinema, examples being *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Saragossa Manuscript*. 65

V Conclusions

Todorov divides the content of the literary fantastic into two semantic classes, themes of the 'I' and themes of the 'you', the 'non-I'. The former class are concerned with the structuring of the relationship between man and the world, the world perceived through his eyes, his 'I', his consciousness, the relation of the structuring subject to its objects. The fantastic tends to put this relationship into question, the problem of vision becoming a main thematic. The latter class concern the dynamic relations of human action in the world through the mediation of others, and are characterised in the fantastic by themes of discourse and desire, the latter in excessive forms as well as in its various transformations (perversions) in themes of cruelty, violence, death, life after death, corpses and vampires. On the expression plane, these are arranged by the use of the narrative sub-code, often as first-person narration. As far as the text of *Vampyr* is concerned, the themes of the cinematic fantastic are similar to those of the literary fantastic. The pronoun functions, part of the narrative sub-code, which also includes the 'grande syntagmatique' insofar as it is applicable, are necessary for narration, though not specific to the fantastic. The interventions of *discours* create disruptions in the plane of expression corresponding to those on the plane of content, and as such the interventions of *discours* participate in the realisation of the fantastic in this particular text. In addition, however, these marks of authorial presence function as part of an authorial code/sub-code which can be shown to have other manifestations in this and other texts, thematically – eg 'narcissism', a concern common to the fantastic and to other texts by Dreyer – and structurally – eg the 'disruptive' continuities in *Joan of Arc*.

It might seem appropriate to separate more clearly two 'levels' of uncertainty in the text: that relating to the status of what Gray sees (is the father 'real', is the body in the coffin 'real?'); and that relating to the 'undermining' of the position of the reader, who is in a relation of uncertainty to the whole text as is Gray to his part in it, the reader not knowing how to read the whole text which includes the uncertainty of David Gray about his own per-

66 ceptions. Analysis of other cinefantastic texts would enable one to establish whether the configuration of character 'I' and authorial 'I' peculiar to *Vampyr* is also characteristic of the genre. One could certainly imagine a text using only 'conventional' coding still raising issues of uncertainty by refusing to mark sections as to whether they pertain to dream or to reality. One could also imagine the reverse, for instance E T A Hoffman's *The Sandman* rewritten by James Joyce so that the problematic of vision would effect systematic displacements at the level of spelling, choice of substantives referring to vision, syntax, and so on, yet the structure as a fantastic text remain the same. Whether the insistence of *discours* is specific to the economy of *Vampyr* as a metonymic displacement from the uncertainty at the level of content, or is rather characteristic of the cinefantastic as a genre, can only be deduced after analysis of other possible members of that genre, which has yet to be done. At the present stage the demands of economy in analysis require the hypothesis of a code of pronoun functions to cover both these types of fact.

Further work is necessary on Dreyer's films to specify the content of the sub-code constituting Dreyer as auteur. 'His' films are appropriated as *films d'auteur*: they are exhibited in 'art cinemas', described as 'non-commercial' – 'It contained an atmosphere of excitement I never found in a commercial studio' (Gavin Lambert) – and so on. In his writing on his own films, Dreyer constantly reinscribes his chosen role of 'creative artist' into his criticism:

'I think it is precisely the task of criticism to encourage them [film directors] to remain loyal to ideas and not to stagnate, and at the same time to force the producers to spend part of their profits from entertainment films on new artistic experiments. I wonder if it isn't an overall failing of the film that it has too few individualists – too few whole personalities' (*Dreyer in Double Reflection*, ed Skoller, New York 1973).

Further work will also be necessary to determine in what ways the authored textual discourse offers this mode of appropriation as authored. This may consist in part in the degree of prominence or insistence of the authorial sub-code. Is the difference here between *The Searchers* and *Vampyr* the fact that the former offers primarily modes of consumption as a genre (Western) and a star (John Wayne) film and only secondarily the author 'Ford', whereas the latter offers primarily the author – 'Well it was really regarded as a Dreyer film and no nationality seemed to be applied to it' (Interview with Baron Nicolas de Gunzburg, pseud Julian West, *Film Culture* n 33), and only secondarily a genre (the fantastic)? This suggests a theoretical model of the 'art cinema' in which a system of authorial intervention clearly distinguishes the film from the 'transparency' of the classical realist text (a model elaborated in recent numbers of *Screen* by Colin McCabe) and facilitates read-

ings in terms of the 'truth' of the authorial subject as origin.

67

The fantastic is predicated on the category of reality: 'The reader and the hero . . . must decide if a certain event or phenomenon belongs to reality or to imagination, that is, must determine whether or not it is real. It is therefore the category of the real which has furnished a basis for our definition of the fantastic' (Todorov; *The Fantastic*, op cit, p 167). A dialectic between (the categories of the real and the unreal characterised the thinking of the nineteenth century: 'The nineteenth century transpired . . . in a metaphysics of the real and the imaginary, and the literature of the fantastic is nothing but the bad conscience of this positivist era' (ibid, p 168). The twentieth century, on the contrary, has tended to emphasise the autonomy of the text from any 'real' referent; it is the era of the modernist text, of Joyce, the nouveau roman, etc. In the cinema, however, this nineteenth-century debate persists in the issue of realism, the problem of the 'reality' of the cinematic referent. The fantastic text is not modernist in the sense say of Robbe-Grillet's *L'Immortelle*, where there is only a reversible series of representations, where the issue of diegetic reality is irrelevant, but it is progressive in that in it the category of the real is at least under scrutiny.

Credits

Vampyr France/Germany 1932

Director – Carl Theodor Dreyer. *Script* – Carl Theodor Dreyer and Christian Jul, freely adapted from the collection of short stories by Sheridan Le Fanu, *Through a Glass Darkly*. *Art Direction* – Hermann Warm (graveyard scene). *Photography* – Rudolph Maté, Louis Née. *Sound* – Dr Hans Bittmann. *Synchronisation* – Paul Falkenberg. *Sound System* – Tobis Klangfilm. *Music* – Wolfgang Zeller. *Production* – Carl Dreyer Film Production, Paris. *Cast* – Julian West (pseud for Baron Nicolas de Gunzburg) (*David Gray*), Maurice Schutz (*the owner or the chateau or the father*), Rena Mandel (*Gisèle, the owner's daughter*), Sybille Schmitz (*Léon, the owner's daughter*), M Hieronimiko (*the village doctor*), Henriette Gerard (*Marguerite Chopin the vampire*), Albert Bras (*the domestic*), A Babiani (*the domestic's wife*), Jane Mora (*the nurse*).

Narrative Space

Stephen Heath

'It is precise that "events *take place*"' Michael Snow

At a climactic point in Hitchcock's *Suspicion*, Lina (Joan Fontaine) receives a visit from two police inspectors come to inform her of the death of a friend in circumstances which cannot but increase her fears concerning the probity – the rectitude – of her husband Johnnie (Cary Grant). The scene finds its centre in a painting: the massive portrait of Lina's father which bears with all its Œdipal weight on the whole action of the film – this woman held under the eye of the father (the name as crushing as the image: General MacKinlaw), sexuality in place as transgression ('Lina will never marry, she's not the marrying sort . . . Lina has intellect and a fine solid character', declares the General early on in the film), as radically 'impossible' (leaving her father for Johnnie, Lina is henceforth racked by doubt, a suspicion that is irresolvable, for her and the film) – and before which she now positions herself to read the newspaper report of the friend's death and to gather strength enough to face the scrutiny of the law, the look relayed from portrait to police and to portrait again (Stills 1, 2, 3, 4). Thus centred, the scene is set out according to that unity so characteristic of classical cinema in its narrative spectacle: the new arrives – the visit, the death, the doubt augmented – and the action is continued, pushed forward, but within a movement of rhyme and balance, of sustained coherence: on either side of what Lina is here given to see (the insert Stop Press report for which she puts on her glasses, catching up one of the basic figures of the film, and which we share from her reading, as previously we share the photo of Johnnie in the society magazine or his telegram on the eve of the Hunt Ball), from the entry of the two inspectors back to their departure at the end of the scene, a perfectly symmetrical patterning builds up and pieces together the space in which the action can take place, the space which is itself part of that action in its

economy, its intelligibility, its own legality.

Consider simply in this respect, across the scene, the shots at the start and close of the visit (Still 5, 6). The coherence is clear – the end comes round to the beginning, one shot echoing the other in the resolution of rhyme – at the same time that the distance travelled forward in the scene is registered, space redefined in the light of the dramatisation effected – alone, diminished by the high angle, Lina is helplessly entangled in the network of shadows, enmeshed in the spider's web of her doubt (the image is common in critical discussions of the film). Moreover, the first shot itself is immediately and dramatically exhaustible in its situation in the film: the maid, Ethel, announces the visitors and functions globally as a comic turn – 'Oh! Mr Aysgarth! What will my young man think!' – in what is, after all, a Hollywood version of England in the 1930's; the dog, another turn, is an impetuous present from Johnnie to Lina; the house is an example of Johnnie's profuse irresponsibility ('Johnnie, you're a baby', comments Lina, dumb-founded, when he shows her the house after the honeymoon). Everything is placed; there is nothing out of line. And yet, something does jar, already, in this first shot. The composition is faultless, the framing describes the theatricality of the inspectors' entry (the ring at the door, the interruption, the unknown), with the columns, steps and walls providing a stage effect, the characters are centred, perspective is sharp: the image is in every sense clearly directed. But not quite. Out of the action, breaking the clarity of direction, obstinately turned away, one of the inspectors is pulling to the left, gazing abruptly at something hidden from us, without reason in this scene.

If a painting stands straight at the centre of the scene, the look that holds Lina's reception of the news, that organises the scene itself, it goes askew at the edges of the beginning and end, instants indeed of another painting. What occupies Benson, the gazing inspector, lost in a kind of fascinated panic, is precisely this other painting, hung on the side wall behind the column by the front door and with a little – repeated – scene of its own within the larger scene in which it is somehow included (Stills 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, 12, 13). At the beginning, just after Lina asks the maid to show the inspectors in, there is a shot of the latter still waiting by the front door but from an angle that now reveals the post-cubist, Picasso-like painting¹ that is the object of Benson's gaze (Still 7); the next shot cuts in closer to give the painting in detail while Benson cranes forward to see it (Still 8), a brief piano phrase totally different to the expressive orchestrations elsewhere dominant emerging on the sound track; cut back to the angle and distance of the previous shot as the maid comes to take the inspectors in to

1. Cf Picasso's 'Nature morte au pichet, bol et fruit' 1931 (Picasso Collection).

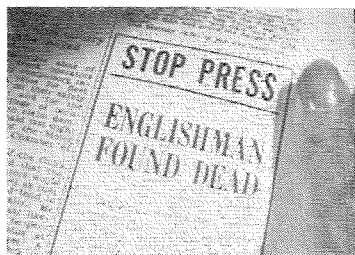
70 her mistress, Benson turning round with a look of shock on his face (Still 9) and then back to the painting again before following the maid and his colleague, continuing nevertheless to throw backward glances at the painting (Still 10). Similarly at the end of the scene: Lina accompanies the inspectors to the door and, while she and the other inspector, Hodgson, are exchanging a few words, Benson once more pulls to the very edge of the frame, towards the disconcerting painting (Still 11); cut to a shot of him craning, with the brief piano phrase, exactly parallel to the one at the beginning (Still 12, cf Still 8); cut back to the medium three-shot, Benson totally disframed, Hodgson having literally to order him back into the scene, into the action (Still 13).

The play here is complex: this other painting has no reason, is 'useless' (isolated, without resonance over the film, marked off by the piano phrase and by the fact of its link with Benson who remains more or less apart in the main substance of the scene, out of frame and with only one line of any significance), beyond the limits of the film; and yet it arrives in the film, set into the rhyming balance of the scene, serving to demonstrate the rectitude of the portrait, the true painting at the centre of the scene, utterly in frame in the film's action. A 'Hitchcock joke'? Perhaps. But a joke that *tells* in a film that hesitates so finely in its enclosure of space, the terms of its points of view. Organised from Lina's point of view (in so far as we have the scenes that she has with respect to her husband, never seeing him separately in a way that might decide the sense of his actions, break the doubt) but under the inspection of an eye (the portrait its mirror) that gives the theatre of the suspicion, the setting of Lina's career, the film as story is easy in its ambiguity: no matter if Johnnie is crooked or not, the picture – from portrait to film – is straight, receivable, readable, psychologically and dramatically; Lina's character, her doubt, our experience of that are in place and it is this place that is important, that is the *film's* reason. Hence, however, a problem of *ending* (it is contingently interesting in this connection that Hitchcock had an alternative ending, that an attempt was made by cutting to produce a version that would eliminate any equivocation as to Cary Grant-as-Johnnie's honesty, that there were difficulties). Lina and Johnnie struggle in the car, Johnnie explains, Lina's doubt is resolved, the car U-turns to take them back together. The unity of the place – containing transgression and sexuality and doubt and guilt, the whole family romance – splits, the perspective now lost, the picture of ambiguity broken, in the absolute-since-here-arbitrary 'banality' of the enforced happy ending (the constraint of 'Cary Grant') which brings back, as its contradiction, the memory of the 'original' struggle outside the church when, in an abrupt moment of violence, Lina is suddenly somewhere else, fighting off Johnnie in the distance of a shot and a space (a wind-swept empty wasteland in the middle of an English village hitherto

and thereafter presented with all the cosy sporting bucolicness one might expect) that is never finally recaptured in – *for* – the film, remains left over within it, a kind of missing spectacle. Benson's painting too – 'his' in so far as it catches him out in his gaze – has its effect as missing spectacle: problem of point of view, different framing, disturbance of the law and its inspecting eye, interruption of the homogeneity of the narrative economy, it is somewhere else again, another scene, another story, another space.



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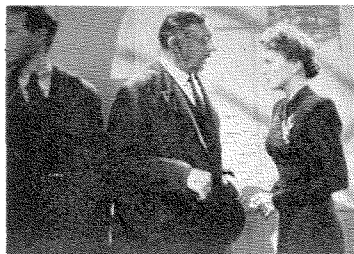
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Snow's stress: events take place. What, then is this 'taking place' in film? *Suspicion* suggests such a question, its action so tightly dependent on the construction and holding of place, its references to painting in the course of that construction and holding, its points of joke or difficulty, excess or otherness. A question that is today posed with insistence, practically and critically, in film-making and film theory. Annette Michelson, for instance, describing the achievement of the work of Snow himself, writes that he 'has redefined filmic space as that of action', has refound 'the tension of narrative' in 'the tracing of spatio-temporal *données*'.² Snow's example, which is indeed crucial in this respect, can serve here as

2. 'Toward Snow', *Artforum* June 1971, p 32; reprinted in *Structural Film Anthology* ed Peter Gidal, London 1976, p 41.

a simple reminder of the importance of a whole number of differing explorations in independent cinema of space and time, narrative and place. Equally, attention has been directed in film theory to 'spatial and temporal articulations', to 'kinds of space' and their narrative determinations or disruptions. The basic text of such an attention is Noël Burch's *Theory of Film Practice*³ and something of its implications – its positions – can be seen in the work on Ozu Yasujiro by Edward Branigan, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson published in the last issue of *Screen*; work which hinges on the demonstration of a certain 'foregrounding' of space in Ozu's films and on the argument that this foregrounding confirms Ozu as a 'modernist' film-maker: 'the modernity of Ozu's work involves the use of specific spatial devices which challenge the supremacy of narrative causality'; 'space, constructed alongside and sometimes against the cause/effect sequence, becomes "foregrounded" to a degree that renders it at times the primary structural level of the film'; 'it is this foregrounding of the spatial code in Ozu's films that justifies us in classifying Ozu as a "modernist" film-maker';⁴ work which in its example in the field of theory again underlines the insistent actuality of the question of space in film and the 'taking place' of events.

If that same question were posed to the start of cinema's history, the answer would come easily enough, without problem: the space of film is the space of reality, film's ambition and triumph is 'to reproduce life' (Louis Lumière); 'nature caught in the act', as a spectator put it after one of the first Cinématographe showings in the Grand Café, while another extolled the finding at last of the 'universal language', 'la langue universelle est trouvée!'.⁵ As its source and authority (its very 'author'), the universal language has no less than the universe itself, the world embraced by the eye of the camera and delivered over on screen, the world in views (films are listed as *vues* in early French catalogues). The long shot is there in classical narrative cinema as it subsequently develops as the constant figure of this embracing and authoritative vision, providing the conventional close to a film, the final word of its reality.

That reality, the match of film and world, is a matter of representation, and representation is in turn a matter of discourse, of the organisation of the images, the definition of the 'views', their construction. It is the discursive operations that decide the work

3. *Theory of Film Practice*, London 1973; first published in French as *Praxis du cinéma*, Paris 1969.

4. Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell: 'Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu', *Screen* v 17 n 2, Summer, 1976, pp 42, 45; Edward Branigan: 'The Space of *Equinox Flower*', *ibid*, p 104.

5. Cf G Sadoul: *Histoire générale du cinéma* (revised edition) Vol I, Paris 1963, pp 288, 290.

74 of a film and ultimately determine the scope of the analogical incidence of the images; in this sense at least, film is a series of languages, a history of codes. The universalist temptation, of course, is exactly the grounding in analogy: film works with photographs and, in the technological, economic and ideological conjuncture of the birth and exploitation of cinema, the photograph is given as the very standard of the reproduction of the real ('photographic realism'). Scientifically, the addition of movement to the photograph to give a picture of life as we see it in the hustle and bustle of the arrival of the train at La Ciotat could be regarded as without interest; illusion is not analysis: Marey, the chronophotographer, has no time for the cinema in the development of which he nevertheless plays a part. Ideologically, the addition of movement (as later the addition of sound to the moving picture) is the possibility of the investment of the photograph as currency of the real in systems of representation that can engage that reality and the guarantee of its vision in a constant – industrial – production of meanings and entertainment within the terms of those meanings.

Meaning, entertainment, vision: film produced as the realisation of a coherent and positioned space, and as that realisation *in movement*, positioning, cohering, binding in. The passage from views to the process of vision is essentially that of the coding of relations of mobility and continuity. Early film space tends simply to the tableauxque, the set of fixed-camera frontal scenes linked as a story ('The Original Comedy Chase / The Most Familiar and Laughable Incident in the Whole List of Childhood Tales / Shown in Eight Snappy Scenes').⁶ Evidently, the tableau has its structure of representation but that structure misses the subject in the very moment of the movement it now offers: the spectator is placed in respect of the scene but the movement is potentially and perpetually excessive. To link scenes as story is not yet to contain that excess in the achievement of a homogeneously continuous space, the spectator cut in as subject precisely to a process of vision, a positioning and positioned movement. It is here that we touch on the history of cinema in its development of codes and systems: beneath that, on the fact of cinema as order of space and time: 'film is not a sum of images but a temporal form'; 'movement is not just perceived in itself but localised in space . . . the spectator is not just responsive to what is moving but also to what stays in place and the perception of movement supposes fixed frames'.⁷

6. American Mutoscope and Biograph Company *Bulletin* account of *Tom, Tom, The Piper's Son*, made in 1905; Kemp R Niver: *The First Twenty Years: A Segment of Film History* (ed B Bergsten), Los Angeles 1968, p 88.

7. M Merleau-Ponty: 'Le cinéma et la nouvelle psychologie' in *Sens et non-sens*, Paris 1948, p 110; P Francastel: 'Espace et illusion', *Revue Internationale de Filmologie* II-5, 1948, p 66.

Such phenomenological descriptions insist on the interlocking spatio-temporality of film and suggest in their turn something of the general area of the problems of film in this connection, those problems that are currently and rightly important. Bearing in mind the particular points of the emergence of that current importance, the aim in what follows will be to provide a descriptive and theoretical context for understanding the debate and to indicate, in so doing, certain critical conclusions with regard to film as 'narrative space'. 75

Photography and cinema share the camera. Photography is a mode of projecting and fixing solids on a plane surface, of producing images; cinema uses the images produced by photography to reproduce movement, the motion of the flow of the images playing on various optical phenomena (φ -effect, retinal persistence) to create the illusion of a single movement in the images, an image of movement. Phenomenologically, the result is characterised as 'neither absolutely two-dimensional nor absolutely three-dimensional, but something between'.⁸ The 'something between' is the habitual response to the famous 'impression of reality' in cinema and it is this impression, this reality that are of concern here in their implications for a consideration of space in film.

Stress has been laid in recent work on the situation of cinema in terms of a development of codes of figuration inherited from the Quattrocento, notably codes of perspective. The focus of attention thus defined is, exactly, the camera: 'a camera productive of a perspective code directly constructed on the model of the scientific perspective of the Quattrocento' (Marcelin Pleynet);⁹ the stress, in other words, is on the camera as machine for the reproduction of objects (of solids) in the form of images realised according to the laws of the rectilinear propagation of light rays, which laws constitute the perspective effect. In this connection, there are already a number of remarks and clarifications to be made, remarks that will bear on Quattrocento perspective, the photograph and cinema, and in that order.

The perspective system introduced in the early years of the fifteenth century in Italy (developing above all from Florence) is that of *central projection*: 'It is the art of depicting three-dimensional objects upon a plane surface in such a manner that the picture may affect the eye of an observer in the same way as

8. R. Arnheim: *Film as Art* (Faber paperback edition), London 1969, p. 20.

9. Cf. M. Pleynet: 'Entretien' (with Gérard Leblanc), *Cinéthique* 3, 1969.

76 the natural objects themselves. . . . A perfectly deceptive illusion can be obtained only on two conditions: (a) the spectator shall use only one eye, (b) this eye has to be placed in the central point of perspective (or, at least, quite near to this point)'.¹⁰ The component elements of that account should be noted: the possible exact match for the eye of picture and object, the deceptive illusion; the centre of the illusion, the eye in place. What is fundamental is the idea of the spectator at a window, an '*aperta finestra*' that gives a view on the world – framed, centred, harmonious (the '*istoria*'). Alberti, in his treatise *Della Pittura* written circa 1435, talks of the picture plane as of a pane of glass on which the world in view can be traced: 'Painters should only seek to present the form of things seen on this plane as if it were of transparent glass. Thus the visual pyramid could pass through it, placed at a definite distance with definite lights and a definite position of centre in space and a definite place in respect to the observer.'¹¹ The cost of such fixed centrality is the marginal distortion which ensues when the observer's eye is not correctly in position in the centre of the perspective projection but pulls to the edge (like Benson's gaze in *Suspicion*, which then receives the shock of another – confusing – painting). Anamorphosis is the recognition and exploitation of the possibilities of this distortion; playing between 'appearance' and 'reality', it situates the centre of the projection of the painting (or of a single element, as in Holbein's 'The Ambassadors' in the National Gallery) obliquely to the side, the sense of the painting – its representation – only falling into place (exactly) once the position has been found. Galileo abhorred these perversions of the 'normal' view into a turmoil of lines and colours ('una confusa e inordinata mescolanza di linee e di colori')¹² but, developed in the course of the sixteenth century and particularly appreciated in the following two centuries, they can be seen as a constant triumph of central perspective, a kind of playful liberation from its constraints that remains nevertheless entirely dependent on its system, a ceaseless confirmation of the importance of centre and position. What must be more crucially emphasised is that, the ideal of a steady position, of a unique embracing centre, to which Galileo refers and to which anamorphosis pays its peculiar homage, is precisely that: a powerful *ideal*. To say this is not simply to acknowledge that the practice of painting from the Quattrocento on is far from a strict adherence to the perspective system but demonstrates a whole variety of 'accommodations' (in certain paintings, for example, buildings will be drawn with one centre according to central

10. G Ten Doesschate: *Perspective: Fundamentals, Controversials, History*, The Hague 1954, pp 6-7.

11. *On Painting* ed J R Spencer, New Haven & London 1956, p 51.

12. *Opere* ed A Favaro, Florence 1890-1909, IX p 129.

perspective while a separate centre will then be chosen for each human figure); it is also to suggest that there is a real utopianism at work, the construction of a code – in every sense a *vision* – projected onto a reality to be gained in all its hoped-for clarity much more than onto some naturally given reality; a suggestion that merely repeats the conclusions of Francastel in his study of the birth of Quattrocento space: ‘It was a question for a society in process of total transformation of a space in accordance with its actions and its dreams. . . . It is men who create the space in which they move and express themselves. Spaces are born and die like societies; they live, they have a history. In the fifteenth century, the human societies of Western Europe organised, in the material and intellectual senses of the term, a space completely different from that of the preceding generations; with their technical superiority, they progressively imposed that space over the planet.’¹³ For five centuries men and women exist at ease in that space; the Quattrocento system provides a practical representation of the world which in time appears so natural as to offer its real representation, the immediate translation of reality in itself.

The conception of the Quattrocento system is that of a scenographic space, space set out as spectacle for the eye of a spectator. Eye and knowledge come together; subject, object and the distance of the steady observation that allows the one to master the other; the scene with its strength of geometry and optics. Of that projected utopia, the camera is the culminating realisation (the *camera obscura*, described by Giambattista della Porta in 1589 in a treatise on optics, commands attention in the wake of the spread of the Quattrocento system); the images it furnishes become, precisely, the currency of that vision, that space: ‘Strong as the mathematical convention of perspective had become in picture making before the pervasion of photography, that event definitely clamped it on our vision and our beliefs about “real” shapes, etc. The public has come to believe that geometrical perspective, so long as it does not involve unfamiliar points of view, is “true”, just as a long time ago it believed that the old geometry of Euclid was “the truth”’; ‘Every day we see photographs which are central perspective images. If another system were applied to the art of painting one could believe that one was living in a bilingual country.’¹⁴ In so far as it is grounded in the photograph, cinema will contribute to the circulation of this currency, will bring with it monocular perspective, the positioning of the spectator-subject in an identification with the camera as the point of a sure and centrally embracing view (Metz draws further conclusions from

13. *Etudes de sociologie de l'art*, Paris 1970, pp 136-7.

14. W M Ivins: *Art and Geometry*, New York 1964, p 108; G Ten Doesschate, *op cit*, p 157.

'Our field of vision is full of solid objects but our eye (like the camera) sees this field from only one station point at a given moment. . . .'¹⁶ The comparison of eye and camera in the interests of showing their similarity has come to seem irresistible: our eye like the camera, with its stationary point, its lens, its surface on which the image is captured, and so on. In fact, of course, any modern scientific description of the eye will go on to indicate the limits of the comparison. Our eye is never seized by some static spectacle, is never some motionless recorder; not only is our vision anyway binocular, but one eye alone sees in time: constant scanning movement to bring the different parts of whatever is observed to the fovea, movements necessary in order that the receptive cells produce fresh neuro-electric impulses, immediate activity of memory inasmuch as there is no brute vision to be isolated from the visual experience of the individual inevitably engaged in a specific socio-historical situation. In a real sense, the ideological force of the photograph has been to 'ignore' this in its presentation as a coherent image of vision, an image that then carries over into a suggestion of the world as a kind of sum total of possible photographs, a spectacle to be recorded in its essence in an instantaneous objectification for the eye (it would be worth considering the ideological determinations and resonances of the development and commercialisation of polaroid photography); a world, that is, conceived outside of process and practice, empirical scene of the confirmed and central master-spectator, serenely 'present' in tranquil rectilinearity (a curvilinear perspective, for which arguments of 'optical realism' can be adduced if need be, comfortably rejected as out of true, as 'wrong').

Cinema is involved with photograph and camera, its principal matter of expression that of moving photographic images ('principal' as we know it in its history), its prime achievement that of the creation of the 'impression of reality' – 'neither absolutely two-dimensional nor absolutely three-dimensional, but something between'. The latter description reads in many ways like an account of the effect of depth of field which gives very much the possibility of a cued construction of space in accordance with the Quattrocento system. Yet cinema can also use in one and the same film quite other projections (lenses with long focal length, for example), projections which approximate more or less, but differently, to the perspective model; simply, angles and distances change, the centre shifts its points. It may well be that classically cinema acquires 'the mobility of the eye' while preserving the contained and delimited visual field on which 'correct' perspectives depend, but the mobility is nevertheless difficult: movement of

15. *Screen* v 16 n 2, Summer 1975, pp 52-4.

16. R. Arnheim, *op cit*, p 18.

figures 'in' film; camera movement, movement from shot to shot; the first gives at once a means of creating perspective (the movements of the figures in a shot can 'bring out' the space, show relative positions, suggest depth) and a problem of 'composition' (film is said to destroy the 'ordinary laws' of pictorial organisation because of its moving figures which capture attention against all else); the second equally produces problems of composition and, though often motivated in the manuals by some extension of the eye-camera comparison (the camera executes the same movements as the head: horizontal panning is turning the head, etc), is strictly regulated in the interests of the maintenance of scenographic space (the version of space, indeed, which determines the justifying comparison); the third, again apt to receive the comparative motivation ('In so far as the film is photographic and reproduces movement, it can give us a life-like semblance of what we see; in so far as it employs editing, it can exactly reproduce the *manner* in which we normally see it'),¹⁷ effectively indicates the filmic nature of film space, film as constantly the construction of a space (thus Branigan will conclude that 'that space exists only at twenty-four frames per second').¹⁸ The ideal of space remains that of photographic vision which brings with it the concern to sustain the camera as eye; in the sense of the detached, untroubled eye discussed earlier, an eye free from the body, outside process, purely looking (no matter, finally, if the falsity of the eye-camera comparison be admitted since it can be retrieved with a confirming twist: the eye in cinema is the *perfect* eye, the steady and ubiquitous control of the scene passed from director to spectator by virtue of the cinematic apparatus: 'The director's aim is to give an *ideal* picture of the scene, in each case placing his camera in such a position that it records most effectively the particular piece of action or detail which is dramatically significant. He becomes, as it were, a ubiquitous observer, giving the audience at each moment of the action the best possible view-point.').¹⁹ The ideal, however, is a construction, the mobility acquired is still not easy, the shifting centre needs to be settled along the film in its making scenes, its taking place; space will be difficult.

To put it another way: mobility is exactly what is *possible* in film, complicit – the possibility of holding film within a certain vision, thereby 'perfected' – and radical – the possibility of film disturbing that vision, with which nonetheless it is immediately involved, historically, industrially, ideologically. Cinema is not simply and specifically ideological 'in itself'; but it is developed in the context of concrete and specific ideological determinations

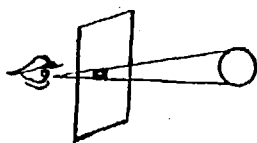
17. E Lindgren: *The Art of the Film*, London 1948, p 54.

18. Op cit, p 104.

19. K Reisz and G Millar: *The Technique of Film Editing* (second enlarged edition), London and New York 1968, p 215.

80 which inform as well the 'technical' as the 'commercial' or 'artistic' sides of that development. For Marey, cinema did nothing 'to rid the eye of any of its illusions' since set up precisely to play on the illusions of a conventional vision, to 'reproduce life' as Lumière put it; for Vertov, cinema could be made to challenge that vision by constructions of dissociations in time and space that would produce the contradictions of the alignment of camera-eye and human-eye in order to displace the subject-eye of the social-historical individual into an operative – transforming – relation to reality. Film is dominantly articulated in the interests of the 'theatrical cinema' Vertov sought to shatter, the world of the scene and the stasis of its relations of vision, but Brecht, and Benjamin with him, will see in the very fact of the succession of film images a certain contradiction to be exploited against that theatre, for a different vision, a different space. In its developments and possibilities, its constraints and disruptions, it is the whole question of space in film that must now be examined further.

The examination of space in film may be divided for the moment into two: the examination of space 'in frame', of the space determined by the frame, held within its limits; the examination of space 'out of frame', the space beyond the limits of the frame, there in its absence and given back, as it were, in the editing of shot with shot or in camera movement with its reframings. The division can be maintained long enough to allow an order for the remarks that follow, remarks which will finally suggest more clearly its inadequacy.



Screen, frame: Notions of screen and frame are fundamental in the elaboration of the perspective system. Leonardo da Vinci writes: 'Perspective is nothing else than seeing a place (or objects) behind a pane of glass, quite transparent, on the surface of which the objects behind that glass are drawn. These can be traced in pyramids to the point in the eye, and these pyramids are intersected on the glass pane.'²⁰ The pane is at once a frame, the frame of a window, and a screen, the area of projection on which what is seen can be traced and fixed; from the Quattrocento on, the

20. *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed J P Richter, London 1939, Vol I, p 150. The figure is Leonardo's own, *ibid*.

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 'pane' delimits and holds a view, the painter's canvas a screen situated between eye and object, point of interception of the light rays (see figure). It is worth noting, indeed, in Renaissance (and post-Renaissance) painting the powerful attraction of the window as theme, the fascination with the rectangle of tamed light, the luminously defined space of vision. In Ghirlandajo's 'Vecchio e bambino' (Louvre, Paris), Titian's 'Isabel di Portugallo' (Prado, Madrid) or Dürer's 'Selbstbildnis' (Prado), for example, a window opens to the right, behind the figure portrayed, onto the perspective of a distant horizon; the figure placed almost as by a cinema screen, the sudden illumination of another view, a frame of light to which we are invited to attend. More important, however, is to grasp the very idea of the frame as fully historical in the developments it is given. Before the fifteenth century, frames hardly exist, other than as the specific architectural setting that is to be decorated (wall, altarpiece, or whatever); it is during that century that frames begin to have an independent reality, this concomitant with the growth of the notion itself of 'a painting' (the first instance of the use of the word 'frame' in an artistic sense recorded by the *Oxford English Dictionary* is c1600). The new frame is symmetrical (the centred rectangle, clearly 'composable') and inevitable (the Quattrocento system cannot be realised without it, it becomes a reflex of 'natural' composition). Significantly, it brings with it the easel (first recorded instance c1634 – 'a frame or easel called by artists'), 'significantly' because the easel is precisely dependent on the idea of 'a painting' as single, central view. The painter stands as spectator in front of his easel (in this history it is men who are the professionals of painting, the authoritative gaze), capturing on the canvas screen the scene behind onto which it gives and which it sets as such; no longer englobed in the area of the painting (dome or arch or ceiling), the painter is definitely upright, an eye on the world, an eye that stations itself, with the easel carried from place to place, much like a tripod. Easel painting, that is, established along with perspective system and *camera obscura* (the latter itself rapidly becomes a portable apparatus for the mobile painter), is a step in the direction of the camera, a camera that will provide screen and frame and the image reflected, fixed, painted with light: a camera that will culminate this whole vision.

'Frame' describes the material unit of film ('the single transparent photograph in a series of such photographs printed on a length of cinematographic film', 'twenty-four frames a second') and, equally, the film image in its setting, the delimitation of the image on screen (in Arnheim's *Film as Art*, for example, 'frame' and 'delimitation' are assumed as synonymous). Framing, determining and laying out the frame, is quickly seen as a fundamental cinematic act, the moment of the very 'rightness' of the image: 'framing, that is to say, bringing the image to the place it must

82 occupy', a definition taken from a manual for teachers written in the 1920's.²¹ Quickly too, and in consequence, it becomes the object of an aesthetic attention concerned to pose decisively the problems of the composition of the frame, of what Eisenstein calls '*mise en cadre*'.

'There it is, our 1.33 to 1 rectangle, it will tolerate precious little tampering with at all' (Hollis Frampton).²² The compositional rectangle is there, carried through into cinema; space is structured within its frame, areas are assigned position in relation to its edges. In a sense, moreover, the constraint of the rectangle is even greater in cinema than in painting: in the latter, its proportions are relatively free; in the former, they are limited to a standard aspect ratio (Frampton's 1.33 to 1 rectangle, the aptly named 'academy frame') or, as now, to a very small number of ratios,²³ with techniques such as masking the sides of the frame to change the size of the rectangle in general disfavour. Hence the rectangle must be mastered – '*Maitriser le rectangle*', the title of one of the key sections in a modern manual for young people. Hence the rules for mastery, rules which come straight from the Quattrocento system, its balanced vision and the composition of the clarity thus decided; so, from the same modern manual: 'To consider the rectangle as a surface crossed by lines of force . . . and with strong points (the points of intersection of those lines) is to guarantee it a solid base structure and to refuse the notion of it as a sort of visual hold-all'; 'If, therefore, we have to place an actor in this rectangle, one of the best places will be that which follows one of the lines of force in question. And the face, "strong point" of the human person, will be placed at one of the strong points of the rectangle'; 'A second character will naturally be placed at one of the strong points . . .'; 'Let us quickly note when we come to "landscapes" how inharmonious is a division of the surface which does not correspond to the famous "third" and how placing the horizon midway in the frame is only apparently logical.'²⁴ In cinema, however, these rules also have their 'excess', there is

21. E Reboul: *Le Cinéma scolaire et éducateur*, Paris 1926.

22. Interview, *Afterimage* 4, Autumn 1972, p 65.

23. Frampton writes elsewhere: 'The film frame is a rectangle, rather anonymous in its proportions, that has been fiddled with recently in the interest of publicising, so far as I can see, nothing much more interesting than the notion of an unbroken and boundless horizon. The wide screen glorifies, it would seem, frontiers long gone: the landscapes of the American corn-flats and the Soviet steppes; it is accommodating to the human body only when that body is lying in state. Eisenstein once proposed that the frame be condensed into a "dynamic" square, which is as close to a circle as a rectangle can get, but his arguments failed to prosper.' 'The Withering Away of the State of Art', *Artforum* December 1974, p 53.

24. *Apprendre le cinéma*, special number of *Image et Son*, 194 bis, May 1966 (Paris), pp 119, 121.

always a further court of appeal – life itself, the very aim of cinema: ‘But cinema is life, is movement. The cinéaste must not fall into the traps of a plastic aesthetic. Failure to remember the rules of framing will often bring agreeable surprises, for it is not without truth that the world is already, in itself, harmonious.’²⁵ 83

If life enters cinema as movement, that movement brings with it nevertheless its problems of composition in frame, as was mentioned earlier in the discussion of perspective. In fact, composition will organise the frame in function of the human figures in their actions; what enters cinema is a logic of movement and it is this logic that centres the frame. Frame space, in other words, is constructed as narrative space. It is narrative significance that at any moment sets the space of the frame to be followed and ‘read’, and that determines the development of the filmic cues in their contributions to the definition of space in frame (focus pull, for example, or back-lighting). Narrative contains the mobility that could threaten the clarity of vision in a constant renewal of perspective; space becomes place – narrative as the taking place of film – in a movement which is no more than the fulfilment of the Renaissance impetus, an impetus that a De Kooning can describe as follows: ‘It was up to the artist to measure out the exact space for a person to die in or to be dead already. The exactness of the space was determined or, rather, inspired by whatever reason the person was dying or being killed for. The space thus measured out on the original plane of the canvas surface became a “place” somewhere on the floor.’²⁶ What is crucial is the conversion of seen into scene, the absolute holding of signifier on signified: the frame, composed, centred, narrated, is the point of that conversion.

Cinema as ‘life in its truth as scene’, the frame as the instance of such a vision. Metz talks here of the régime ‘of the primal scene and the keyhole’: ‘the rectangular screen permits every type of fetishism, all the effects of “just-before”, since it places at exactly the height it wants the sharp vibrant bar which stops the seen. . . .’²⁷ The fascination of the scene is there, and from the beginnings of cinema with its tableaux, its dramatic masks (including the keyhole-shaped matte; as in *A Search for Evidence*,

25. Ibid, p 123.

26. Quoted by Rosalind Krauss in ‘A View of Modernism’, *Artforum* September 1972, p 50; Krauss comments: ‘Perspective is the visual correlate of causality that one thing follows the next in space according to rule . . . perspective space carried with it the meaning of narrative: a succession of events leading up to and away from this moment; and within that temporal succession – given as a spatial analogue – was secreted the “meaning” of both that space and those events.’

27. Christian Metz: ‘Histoire/discours’ in *Langue, discours, société* ed J Kristeva, J-C Milner, N Ruwet, Paris 1975, p 304 (translated in *Edinburgh Magazine* n 1, 1976).

84 AM&B 1903), its occasional thematic directnesses (in *Gay Shoe Clerk*, Edison Co 1903, which involves a flirtatious shoe clerk, an attractive young lady and her chaperone armed with an umbrella, a cut in close-up shows the young lady's ankle with the clerk's hand gripping her foot into the shoe);²⁸ the fetishism is there, with the edge, the limit, the setting, the careful place, and from Alberti on – witness that whole series of machines and devices for the production of a certain distance of image, a sure illusion of scrutiny. Simply, the 'just-before' in film is spatially moving, the itinerary of a fixity perpetually gained, and the frame stands – acts – in relation to that.

As for the screen, it receives and gives the frame, its flatness halts the image and lays the base of that triangle for which the spectator's eye provides the apex. Doubtless there is a sheer pleasure for the position of the eye in the very fact of the projection of the frames onto and from the screen, in their 'hitting the screen';²⁹ a space is established with no 'behind' (it is important that the Lumière brothers should set the screen as they do in the Grand Café and not with the audience on either side of a translucent screen, that cinema architecture should take its forms in consequence, that there should be no feeling of machinery to the side of or beyond the screen, that the screen should be one of the most stable elements in cinema's history), a pure expanse that can be invested with depth. The screen, that is, is at once ground, the surface that supports the projected images, and background, its surface caught up in the cone of light to give the frame of the image. Ground and background are one in the alignment of frame and screen, the 'in frame on screen' that is the basis of the spatial articulations a film will make, the start of its composition.³⁰

28. A still from the shot can be found in Niver, op cit, p 36.

29. 'There must be a lot of essential pleasure just in the films when they hit the screen – I heard this expression yesterday, "to hit the screen", that's fantastic in English. Hit the screen – this is really what the frames do. The projected frames hit the screen.' Peter Kubelka, Interview (with Jonas Mekas), *Structural Film Anthology*, p 102.

30. For detailed consideration of the ideological weight of screen and frame, see my 'On screen, in frame: film and ideology', *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Autumn 1976. It can be noted that much independent film work has been concerned to experience dislocations of screen and frame; Sharits, for example, writes: 'When a film "loses its loop" it allows us to see a blurred strip of jerking frames; this is quite natural and quite compelling subject material. When this non-framed condition is intentionally induced, a procedure I am currently exploring, it could be thought of as "anti-framing".' 'Words per page', *Afterimage* 4, Autumn 1972, p 40. For an attempt by a film-maker to provide a theoretical formulation of such dislocation using the notion of a 'second screen' (in fact, the frame on screen in a narrative coherence of ground/background)

Psychoanalysis, it may be briefly added, has come to stress the dream as itself projected on a screen: the *dream screen*, blank surface present in dreams though mostly 'unseen', covered over by the manifest content of the projected dream; a screen that represents the breast (infinitely extensive centre of the baby's visual space) and then also sleep (the desire for sleep) as an original ground of pleasure 'before' difference, 'before' identity, 'before' symbolisation.³¹ In cinema, the images pass (twenty-four per second), the screen remains; covered but there, specified – the images of this or that film – but the same – the satisfying projection of a basic oneness. The force of this relation, however, must be understood: it is the passing of the images that produces the constancy of the screen; without those images the screen is 'empty', with them it is an impression, a surface-ground that the film and the spectator find as the frames hit the screen, that they find intact, safely in the background (revealing and disturbing moment when a character in a film throws something, as is said, 'at the screen').³²

Movement, transitions: From the very first, as though of right, human figures enter film, spilling out of the train, leaving the factory or the photographic congress, *moving* – this is the movies, these are moving pictures. The figures move in the frame, they come and go, and there is then need to change the frame, reframing with a camera movement or moving to another shot. The transitions thus effected pose acutely the problem of the filmic construction of space, of achieving a coherence of place and positioning the spectator as the unified and unifying subject of its vision. It is this process of construction, indeed, which is often regarded as the power of cinema and as defining the overall reality of film as that of a kind of generalised 'trick effect': 'if several successive images represent a space under different angles, the spectator, victim of the "trick effect", spontaneously perceives the space as unitary. . . .'³³

Early films are typically organised as a series of fixed scenes, with a strict unity of time and place. The example was cited above of *Tom, Tom, The Piper's Son* which tells the well-known story in

that independent cinema will destroy ('in independent cinema, there is no second screen'), see Claudine Eizykman: *La jouissance-cinéma*, Paris 1976, esp pp 147-151.

31. B D Lewin: 'Sleep, the Mouth, and the Dream Screen', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* XV, 1946, pp 419-434.
32. Discussion of screen and dream screen is suggested at the close of a recent article by Guy Rosolato: 'Souvenir-écran', *Communications* 23, 1975, pp 86-87. See also my 'Screen Images, Film Memory', *Edinburgh Magazine* n 1, 1976, pp 33-42.
33. Christian Metz: *Essais sur la signification au cinéma* II, Paris 1972, p 189.

86 'eight snappy scenes', simply joined the one after the other as so many *tableaux*. The actions of the characters in frame, as though on a stage, make out the sense of the image, centre the eye in paths of reading, but within the limits of the distance of the fixed frontal view which creates difficulties of effectively maintaining such a centred perception given the continual wealth of movements and details potentially offered by the photographic image (Ken Jacobs in his film of the same title minutely explores the surface of *Tom, Tom, The Piper's Son*, refilming from the screen and finding in so doing not just 'other' actions but also 'central' actions not easily grasped or possibly even missed in the original – as, for instance, the handkerchief stealing in the opening shot). Those difficulties, in the context of its commercial exploitation, are fundamental for cinema's development. The centre is the movement, not movements but the logic of a consequent and temporally coherent action. The vision of the image is its narrative clarity and that clarity hangs on the negation of space for place, the constant realisation of centre in function of narrative purpose, narrative movement: 'Negatively, the space is presented so as not to distract attention from the dominant actions: positively, the space is "used up" by the presentation of narratively important settings, character traits ("psychology"), or other causal agents.'³⁴ Specific spatial cues – importantly, amongst others, those depending on camera movement and editing – will be established and used accordingly, centring the flow of the images, taking place.

Which is to say, of course, that the *tableau* space of the early films is intolerable in its particular fixity, must be broken up in the interests of the unity of action and place and subject view as that unity is conceived from the narrative models of the novelistic that cinema is dominantly exploited to relay and extend. Burch puts it well: 'It was necessary to be able to film objects or people close up – to isolate a face, a hand, an accessory (as the discourse of the novel does) – but avoiding any disorientation of the spectator in respect of his or her own "reasoned" analysis of the spatial continuum. . . .'³⁵ The need is to cut up and then join together in a kind of spatial *Aufhebung* that decides a superior unity, the binding of the spectator in the space of the film, the space it realises. In the late 1930's and early 1940's, the average shot length of a full-length Hollywood film has been estimated at about 9-10 seconds,³⁶ but that fragmentation is the condition of a

34. Bordwell and Thompson, art cit, p 42. For an initial discussion of procedures of image centring ('specification procedures'), see 'Film and System' II, *Screen* v 16 n 2, Summer 1975, pp 99-100.

35. 'De *Mabuse* à *M*: le travail de Fritz Lang', in *Cinéma Théorie Lectures* (special number of the *Revue d'Esthétique*), Paris 1973, p 229.

36. See Barry Salt: 'Statistical Style Analysis of Motion Pictures', *Film Quarterly*, Fall 1974, pp 13-22.

fundamental continuity.

'There are no jerks in time or space in real life. Time and space are continuous. Not so in film. The period of time that is being photographed may be interrupted at any point. One scene may be immediately followed by another that takes place at a totally different time. And the continuity of space may be broken in the same manner.'³⁷ Why is it, Arnheim goes on to ask, that the 'juggling with space' possible in film (and including the breaking of a single 'real life' space into 'several successive images . . . under different angles') does not cause discomfort? The answer refers back to the 'something-between' status of film previously mentioned: 'Film gives simultaneously the effect of an actual happening and of a picture. A result of the "pictureness" of film is, then, that a sequence of scenes that are diverse in time and space is not felt as arbitrary. . . . If film photographs gave a very strong spatial impression, montage probably would be impossible. It is the partial unreality of the film picture that makes it possible.'³⁸ The emphasis on the 'pictureness' of the image is crucial here (there would be problems of cutting for spatial unity with holography): the space constructed in film is exactly a *filmic construction*. Thus Mitry, for example, will write that shots are like 'cells', 'distinct spaces the succession of which, however, reconstitutes a homogeneous space, but a space *unlike* that from which these elements were subtracted'.³⁹

The conception at work in such descriptions can be seen (even if in this or that writer that conception may be inflected 'aesthetically', turned in the direction of film as 'art'). The filmic construction of space is recognised in its difference but that difference is the term of an ultimate similarity (indeed, a final 'illusion'); the space is 'unlike' but at the same time 'reconstitutes', using elements lifted from real space. In fact, we are back in the realm of 'composition', where composition is now the laying out of a succession of images in order to give the picture, to produce the implication of a coherent ('real') space; in short, to create continuity.

The compositional rules for spatial clarity and continuity are sufficiently well-known not to need extended discussion at this stage; it will be enough merely to stress one or two of their determinations. Firstly, the establishment of fixed patterns of clarity for the variation of scale of shot in a scene: there are 'normal ways' of organising dialogue scenes, action scenes, and so on;⁴⁰ these systems allowing for a certain free play – 'exceptions' –

37. R Arnheim, *op cit*, p 27.

38. *Ibid*, p 32.

39. J Mitry: *Esthétique et psychologie du cinéma II*, Paris 1965, p 10.

40. Branigan gives the schema of the inverted pyramid structure characteristic of classical Hollywood film; *art cit*, p 75.

88 within their overall structure in the interests of 'dramatic effect' ('In the normal way, it is almost certainly better to cut the scenes as we have indicated, but . . . there may be exceptions when the rules need to be modified to convey certain dramatic effects.').⁴¹ What may be remembered above all in this context is the extreme importance attached to providing an overall view, literally the 'master-shot' that will allow the scene to be dominated in the course of its reconstitution narratively as dramatic unity ('Even where a sequence starts on a detail, it is important that the whole setting should be shown at some stage').⁴² Take the beginning of *Jaws*: a beach party with the camera tracking slowly right along the line of the faces of the participants until it stops on a young man looking off; eyeline cut to a young woman who is thus revealed as the object of his gaze; cut to a high-angle shot onto the party that shows its general space, its situation, before the start of the action with the run down to the ocean and the first shark attack – the shot serves, that is, as a kind of master fold in the sequence, setting it correctly in place. Secondly, the establishment of the 180-degree and 30-degree rules. The former matches screen space and narrative space (the space represented in the articulation of the images), ground and background; with its help, 'one will always find the same characters in the same parts of the screen'.⁴³ The 180-degree line that the camera is forbidden to cross answers exactly to the 180-degree line of the screen behind which the spectator cannot and must not go, in front of which he or she is placed within the triangle of representation, the space of the image projected, that is repeated in the very terms of the fiction of the imaged space. As for the latter, a 'quick, simple rule that issues directly from the necessities of cinematic fragmentation' and that avoids the 'disagreeable sensation' of a 'jump in space',⁴⁴ it is finally nothing other than a specific perspective rule for a smooth line of direction in film, for the achievement of a smooth line in from shot to shot. Thirdly and lastly, following on from those more particular remarks, the establishment generally as a powerful evidence, as a natural basis, of the idea of continuity as smoothness in transitions: the rules of the filmic construction of space on screen (master-shot, 180-degree and 30-degree rules, matching on action, eyeline matching, field/reverse field, etc) background the image flow into a unified subject-space, immediately and fully continuous, reconstitutive: 'Making a smooth cut means joining two shots in such a way that the transition does not create a noticeable jerk and the spectator's illusion of seeing a continuous

41. Reisz and Millar, *op cit*, pp 224-5.

42. *Ibid*, pp 225-6.

43. *Apprendre le cinéma*, p 142.

44. *Ibid*, p 151.

piece of action is not interrupted.⁴⁵

Continuity in these terms is also decisive with regard to transitions and changes of frame effected by camera movement. 'Im-perceptible' reframing movements, more definite pans and tracking shots are developed in the interests of the narrative composition of space in relation to the actions of the characters;⁴⁶ here too, rules are elaborated accordingly, the camera having, for instance, to impregnate space with the anticipation of action: 'if the actor is accompanied by a movement of the camera, more "room" must be left in front of him or her than behind, so as to figure sensorially the space to be crossed'.⁴⁷ In this respect, it is worth bearing in mind the extent to which the sequence-shot-with-deep-focus long take valued by Bazin in his account of 'the evolution of cinematic language' can stay within such a conception of space. The narrative of a Welles or a Wyler in Bazin's account is carried through in a manner that retains the particular effects to be derived from 'the unity of the image in time and space', a manner that refinds and draws out the essential 'realism' of cinema; a realism in which space is all important: 'the cinematographic image can be emptied of all reality save one – the reality of space'.⁴⁸ The space of *Citizen Kane* or *The Best Years of Our Lives* is still entirely dramatic, however; heightened indeed in its drama: as was suggested earlier, deep focus allows composition for a high degree of perspective ('depth of field' exactly), and this can be increased over the long take with its potential definition of a complex action in a single shot, its filling out of movements and positions in a temporally visible demonstration of space as narrative place.⁴⁹ It should anyway be noted that the average shot length overall of *Citizen Kane*

45. Reisz and Millar, op cit p 216. To emphasise the reality of this smoothness as construction rather than 'reflection', it can be noted that the Navajo Indians studied by Worth and Adair, though capable of producing the 'correct' continuity (for example, by matching on action), were very far from the 'rules' in their films, articulating another system of space as an area of action (in which 'jumps' from the standpoint of the vision of the rules became essential continuities); cf Sol Worth and John Adair: *Through Navajo Eyes*, Bloomington 1972, p 174 and Stills 22-35, 35-40.

46. Barry Salt has pointed to the importance of the outdoor-action subject film (esp the Western) historically in this development; 'The Early Development of Film Form', *Film Form* 1, Spring 1976, pp 97-98.

47. *Apprendre le cinéma*, p 125 ('an orientated empty space is a promise').

48. A Bazin: *What is Cinema?* I, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1967, p 108.

49. Which is not, of course, to say that deep focus must necessarily be used in this way; for analysis of 'a refusal of perspective within depth of field', see Cl Bailblé, M Marie, M-C Ropars: *Muriel*, Paris 1974, pp 128-36.

90 is 12 seconds, 'about average for its period',⁵⁰ and it remains true that classically continuity is built on fragmentation rather than the long take – on a segmentation for recomposition that can bind the spectator in the strong articulations of the unity it seeks to create. Elsewhere, Bazin was to refer to the version of the spatial realism he ontologically cherished provided by Italian Neo-Realism; a version that might show the possibilities of the long take away from an absorbed dramatic space; and so, by contrast, the force of the classical continuity in that dependence on segmentation-articulation and its effective inclusion of the longer take within its terms of spatial construction.

Those terms, as they have been described here, are the terms of a constant welding together: screen and frame, ground and background, surface and depth, the whole setting of movements and transitions, the implication of space and spectator in the taking place of film as narrative. The classical *economy* of film is its organisation thus as organic unity and the *form* of that economy is narrative, the *narrativisation* of film. Narrative, as it were, determines the film which is contained in its process in that determination, this 'bind' being itself a process – precisely the narrativisation. The narration is to be held on the narrated, the enunciation on the enounced; filmic procedures are to be held as narrative instances (very much as 'cues'), exhaustively, without gap or contradiction. What is sometimes vaguely referred to as 'transparency' has its meaning in this narrativisation: the proposal of a discourse that disavows its operations and positions in the name of a signified that it proposes as its pre-existent justification. 'Transparency', moreover, is entirely misleading in so far as it implies that narrativisation has necessarily to do with some simple 'invisibility' (anyway impossible – no one has yet seen a signified without a signifier). The narration may well be given as visible in its filmic procedures; what is crucial is that it be given as visible for the narrated and that the spectator be caught up in the play of that process, that the *address* of the film be clear (does anyone who has watched, say, *The Big Sleep* seriously believe that a central part of Hollywood films, differently defined from genre to genre, was not the address of a process with a movement of play and that that was not a central part of their pleasure?).

Within this narrativisation of film, the role of the character-look has been fundamental for the welding of a spatial unity of narrative implication. In so many senses, every film is a veritable drama of vision and this drama has thematically and symptomatically 'returned' in film since the very beginning: from the fascination

50. B Salt: 'Statistical Style Analysis', p 20.

of the magnifying glass in *Grandma's Reading Glass* to Lina's 91
short-sightedness in *Suspicion* to the windscreen and rear-view
mirror of *Taxi Driver*, from the keyhole of *A Search for Evidence*
to the images that flicker reflected over Brody's glasses in *Jaws*
as he turns the pages of the book on sharks, finding the images
of the film to come and which he will close as he closes the book;
not to mention the extended dramatisations such as *Rear Window*
or *Peeping Tom*. How to make sense in film if not through vision,
film with its founding ideology of vision as truth? The drama of
vision in the film returns the drama of vision of the film: the
spectator will be bound to the film as spectacle as the world of the
film is itself revealed as spectacle on the basis of a narrative
organisation of look and point of view that moves space into place
through the image-flow; the character, figure of the look, is a kind
of perspective within the perspective system, regulating the world,
orientating space, providing directions – and for the spectator.

Film works at a loss, the loss of the divisions, the discontinuities,
the absences that structure it – as, for example, the 'outside' of
the frame, off-screen space, the *hors-champ*. Such absence is the
final tragedy of a Bazin, who wants to believe in cinema as a
global consciousness of reality, an illimitation of picture frame and
theatre scene – 'The screen is not a frame like that of a picture,
but a mask which allows us to see a part of the event only. When a
person leaves the field of the camera, we recognise that he or she
is out of the field of vision, though continuing to exist identically
in another part of the scene which is hidden from us. The screen
has no wings . . .'⁵¹ – but who can only inspect the damage of
'camera angles or prejudices',⁵² acknowledge nonetheless the
frame, the scene, the mask, the hidden, the absent. The sequence-
shot-with-deep-focus long take functions as a utopia in this con-
text – the ideal of a kind of 'full angle', without prejudices, but
hence too without cinema; the ideal recognised in *Bicycle Thieves*,
'plus de cinéma'.⁵³

Burch writes that 'off-screen space has only an intermittent or,
rather, *fluctuating* existence during any film, and structuring this
fluctuation can become a powerful tool in a film-maker's hands'.⁵⁴
The term 'fluctuation' is excellent, yet it must be seen that the
work of classical continuity is not to hide or ignore off-screen space
but, on the contrary, to contain it, to regularise its fluctuation in
a constant movement of reappropriation. It is this movement that
defines the rules of continuity and the fiction of space they serve

51. A Bazin: *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* II, Paris 1959, p 100.

52. A Bazin: *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* IV, Paris 1962, p 57.

53. Ibid, p 59. For discussion of Bazin on Neo-Realism, see Christopher
Williams's article of that title in *Screen* v 14 n 4, Winter 1973/74,
pp 61-8.

54. *Theory of Film Practice*, p 21.

92 to construct, the whole functioning according to a kind of metonymic lock in which off-screen space becomes on-screen space and is replaced in turn by the space it holds off, each joining over the next. The join is conventional and ruthlessly selective (it generally leaves out of account, for example, the space that might be supposed to be masked at the top and bottom of the frame, concentrating much more on the space at the sides of the frame or on that 'in front', 'behind the camera', as in variations of field/reverse field), and demands that the off-screen space recaptured must be 'called for', must be 'logically consequential', must arrive as 'answer', 'fulfilment of promise' or whatever (and not as difference or contradiction) – must be narrativised. Classical continuity, in other words, is an order of the pregnancy of space in frame; one of the narrative acts of a film is the creation of space⁵⁵ but what gives the moving space its coherence in time, decides the metonymy as a 'taking place', is here 'the narrative itself', and above all as it crystallises round character as look and point of view. The fundamental role of these is exactly their pivotal use as a mode of organisation and organicisation, the joining of a film's constructions, the stitching together of the overlaying metonymies.

'If in the left of the frame an actor in close-up is looking off right, he has an empty space in front of him; if the following shot shows an empty space to the left and an object situated to the right, then the actor's look appears to cross an orientated, rectilinear, thus logical space: it seems to bear with precision on the object. One has an eye-line match.'⁵⁶ The look, that is, joins form of expression – the composition of the images and their disposition in relation to one another – and form of content – the definition of the action of the film in the movement of looks, exchanges, objects seen, and so on. Point of view develops on the basis of this joining operation of the look, the camera taking the position of a character in order to show the spectator what he or she sees.⁵⁷ Playing on the assumption of point of view, a film has an evident means of placing its space, of giving it immediate and holding significance; Burch talks of the establishment of an organisation founded on the 'traditional dichotomy between the "subjective camera" (which "places the spectator in the position of a character") and the "objective camera" (which makes the spectator the ideal, immaterial "voyeur" of a pro-filmic pseudo-reality).'⁵⁸

55. Branigan, art cit, p 103.

56. *Apprendre le cinéma*, p 148.

57. For a detailed analysis of the point-of-view shot, see Edward Branigan: 'Formal Permutations of the Point-of-View Shot', *Screen* v 16 n 3, Autumn 1975, pp 54-64.

58. Noël Burch and Jorge Dana: 'Propositions', *Afterimage* 5, Spring 1974, p 45.

This account, however, requires clarification. The point-of-view shot is 'subjective' in that it assumes the position of a subject-character but to refer to that assumption in terms of 'subjective camera' or 'subjective image' can lead to misunderstanding with regard to the functioning of point of view. Subjective images can be many things; Mitry, for example, classifies them into five major categories: 'the purely mental image (more or less impracticable in the cinema); the truly subjective or analytical image (ie what is looked at without the person looking), which is practicable in small doses; the semi-subjective or associated image (ie the person looking + what is looked at, which is in fact looked at from the viewpoint of the person looking), the most generalisable formula; the complete sequence given over to the imaginary, which does not raise special problems; and finally the memory image, which is in principle simply a variety of the mental image but, when presented in the form of a flash-back with commentary, allows for a specific filmic treatment which is far more successful than in the case of other mental images.'⁵⁹ The point-of-view shot includes 'the semi-subjective or associated image' (its general mode) and 'the truly subjective or analytical image' (its pure mode, as it were) in that classification but not necessarily any of the other categories (a memory sequence, for instance, need not contain any point-of-view shots); what is 'subjective' in the point-of-view shot is its spatial positioning (its place), not the image or the camera.

To stress this is to stress a crucial factor in the exploitation of the film image and its relation to point-of-view organisation. Within the terms of that organisation, a true subjective image would effectively need to mark its subjectivity in *the image itself*. Examples are common: the blurred image of Gutman in *The Maltese Falcon* is the subjective image of the drugged Spade; the blurring of focus marks the subjectivity of the image, exclusively Spade's, and the spectator is set not simply *with* Spade but *as* Spade. They are also limited, since they depend exactly on some recognisable – marking – distortion of the 'normal' image, a narratively motivated aberration of vision of some kind or another (the character is drugged, intoxicated, short-sighted, terrified . . . down to he or she running, with hand-held effects of the image 'jogging', or even walking, with regular speed of camera movement forward matched on a shot that effectively establishes the character as in the process of walking; the latter represents the lowest limit on the scale since the camera movement is there a weak subjective marking of the image which itself remains more or less 'normal' – except, of course, and hence this limit position of the banal action of walking, that the normal image is precisely static, that movement in a central perspective system can quickly

59. As summarised by Metz in his 'Current Problems in Film Theory', *Screen* v 14 n 1/2, Spring/Summer 1973, p 49.

94 become a problem of vision). The implication of this, of course, is then the strength of the unmarked image as a constant third person – the vision of picture and scene, the Quattrocento view. Burch's 'voyeur' position – *which is generally continued within point-of-view shots themselves*; the point-of-view shot is marked as subjective in its emplacement but the resulting image is still finally (or rather firstly) objective, the objective sight of what is seen from the subject position assumed. Indicatively enough, the general mode of the point-of-view shot is the shot which shows both what is looked at and the person looking. Instances of the pure shot, showing what is looked at without the person looking, however, are equally conclusive. Take the shot in *Suspicion* of the telegram that Lina receives from Johnnie to tell her of his intention to attend the Hunt Ball: the telegram is clearly shown from Lina's reading position and the end of the shot – the end of the reading – is marked by her putting down her glasses onto the telegram lying on a table, the glasses thus coming down into frame; the position of the shot is marked as subjective with Lina but the image nevertheless continue to be objective, 'the real case' for the narrative.⁶⁰

Point of view, that is, depends on an overlaying of first and third person modes. There is no radical dichotomy between subjective point-of-view shots and objective non-point-of-view shots; the latter mode is the continual basis over which the former can run in its particular organisation of space, its disposition of the images. The structure of the photographic image – with its vision, its scene, its distance, its normality – is to the film somewhat as language is to the novel: the grounds of its representations, which representations can include the creation of an acknowledged movement of point of view. This is the sense of the spectator identification with the camera that is so often remarked upon (Benjamin: 'the audience's identification with the actor is really an identification with the camera'; Metz: 'the spectator can do no other than identify with the camera').⁶¹ The spectator must *see* and this structuring vision is the condition of the possibility of the disposition of the images

60. In fact, and not surprisingly, the less narratively 'metonymical' and the more 'metaphorical' is what is looked at in the pure point-of-view shot (without the marking of image distortion), the nearer such a shot will come to subjectivising the image. Released from prison at the beginning of *High Sierra*, Roy Earle is shown walking through a park, breathing the air of freedom; shots of him looking up are followed by shots of tree tops against the sky, with a certain effect of subjectivisation in so far as the tree tops against the sky are outside the immediate scope of the movement of the narrative and, objectively useless (unlike Lina's telegram), belong only for Roy's character (he was born of a modest farming family and is not the hardened criminal his reputation would have him be).

61. Walter Benjamin: *Illuminations*, London 1970, p 230; Christian Metz: 'The Imaginary Signifier', *Screen* v 16 n 2, Summer 1975, p 52.

via the relay of character look and viewpoint which pulls together vision and narrative. Emphasis was laid earlier on the structures of the structuring vision that founds cinema; what is emphasised now is the dependence of our very notion of point of view on those structures; dependence at once in so far as the whole Quattrocento system is built on the establishment of point of view, the central position of the eye, and in so far as the mode of representation thus defined brings with it fixity and movement in a systematic complicity of interaction – brings with it, that is, the ‘objective’ and the ‘subjective’, the ‘third person’ and the ‘first person’, the view and its partial points, and finds this drama of vision as the resolving action of its narratives.

Identification with the camera, seeing, the ‘ideal picture’ of the scene: ‘the usual scene in a classical film is narrated as if from the point of view of an observer capable of moving about the room’.⁶² Such movement may be given in editing or by camera movement within a shot, and the importance accruing to some master view that will define the space of the mobility has been noted. Movement, in fact, will be treated as a supplement to produce precisely the ‘ideal picture’ (going to the movies is going to the pictures): on the basis of the vision of the photographic image, that is, it will provide the ‘total’ point of view of an observer capable of moving about the room without changing anything of the terms of that vision, the scene laid out for the central observer (and spectator); every shot or reframing adds a difference but that difference is always the same image, with the organisation – the continuity, the rules, the matches, the pyramid structures – constantly doing the sum of the *scene*.

That said, it remains no less true, as has again been noted and as will become important later on, that movement represents a potentially radical disturbance of the smooth stability of the scenographic vision (hence the need for a systematic organisation to contain it). Such a disturbance, however, is not as simple as is sometimes suggested and it is necessary briefly to consider at this stage two instances of disturbance as they are conventionally described; both bear on the mobility of the camera.

The first is that of what Branigan characterises as the impossible place: ‘To the extent that the camera is located in an “impossible” place, the narration questions its own origin, that is, suggests a shift in narration’.⁶³ ‘Impossible’, of course, is here decided in respect of the ‘possible’ positions of the observer moving about, the disturbance involved seen as a disjunction of the unity of narration and narrated, enunciation and enounced. Thus defined, impossible places are certainly utilised in classical narra-

62. Edward Branigan: ‘Narration and Subjectivity in Cinema’, mimeographed, University of Wisconsin-Madison 1975, p 24.

63. Ibid, p 24.

96 tive cinema, with examples ranging from the relatively weak to the relatively strong. At one end of the range, the weak examples would be any high or low angles that are not motivated as the point of view of a character; or, indeed, any high or low angles that, while so motivated, are nevertheless sufficiently divergent from the assumed normal upright observing position as to be experienced as in some sense 'impossible' in their peculiarity (the most celebrated – and complex – example is the dead-man-in-the-coffin point of view in *Vampyr*).⁶⁴ At the other end, the strong examples – those intended by Branigan – can be illustrated by a description of two shots from *Killer's Kiss*: (1) as Davey, the boxer-hero, is seen stooping to feed his goldfish, there is a cut to a shot through the bowl, from the other side, of his face peering in as the feed drops down; since the bowl is on a table against a wall, the place taken by the camera is not possible; (2) Rappello, the dance-hall owner, furious at being left by the heroine, is drinking in a back-room, its walls covered with posters and prints; a close-up of a print showing two men leering from a window is followed by a shot of Rappello who throws his drink at the camera ('at the screen'!); a crack appears as the drink runs down a plate of glass; impossibly, the shot was from 'in' the print. The second – and related – instance of disturbance is that of the development of camera movement as a kind of autonomous figure; what Burch calls 'the camera designated as an "omnipotent and omniscient" (ie manipulative and pre-cognitive) presence'.⁶⁵ This presence too is utilised in classical narrative cinema and weak and strong examples can once more be indicated. In *Taxi Driver*, Travis Bickle is seen phoning Betsy after the porno-film fiasco; as he stands talking into the pay-phone, fixed on a wall inside a building, the camera tracks right and stops to frame a long empty corridor leading out to the street; when Travis finishes his call, he walks into frame and exits via the corridor. The tracking movement designates the camera with a certain autonomy – there is an effect of a casual decision to go somewhere else, off to the side of the narrative – but the example is ultimately weak: the corridor is eventually brought into the action with Travis's exit and, more importantly, it has its rhyming and thematic resonances – the corridors in the rooming-house used by Iris, the marked existential atmosphere of isolation, nothingness, etc. Stronger examples are provided in the work of an Ophüls or a Welles – the spectacular tracking shot at the start of *Touch of Evil* or the intense mobility in many of the shots at the end of that same film.

These two instances of disturbance have been characterised here

64. Discussed by Barthes: 'Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein', *Screen* v 15 n 2, p 38; Branigan, 'The Point-of-View Shot', p 57; and Mark Nash: 'Vampyr and the Fantastic', above, pp 32-3, 54-60.

65. Burch and Dana: 'Propositions', p 45.

in their existence in established cinema simply to make one or two points directly in the context of the present account. Thus, the examples given of autonomy of camera movement are all clearly operating in terms of 'style' (Welles, Ophuls, the tics of a new American commercial cinema that has learnt a consciousness of style). The crucial factor is not the valuation of camera movement, be it autonomous, but the point at which a certain work on the camera in movement produces the normality of the third person objective basis as itself a construction, gives it as role or fiction and breaks the balance of the point-of-view system. Similarly, the examples of the impossible place from *Killer's Kiss*, which also have their reality as stylistic marking in the film, are without critically disruptive extension in themselves, are simply tricks (in the sense of spatial prestidigitations): the impossible place is entirely possible if held within a system that defines it as such, that it confirms in its signified exceptionality. The felt element of trick, moreover, raises the general point of the realisation of film as process. It is too readily assumed that the operation – the determination, the effect, the pleasure – of classical cinema lies in the attempt at an invisibility of process, the intended transparency of a kind of absolute 'realism' from which all signs of production have been effaced. The actual case is much more complex and subtle, and much more telling. Classical cinema does not efface the signs of production, it contains them, according to the narrativisation described above. It is that process that is the action of the film for the spectator – what counts is as much the representation as the represented, is as much the production as the product. Nor is there anything surprising in this: film is not a static and isolated object but a series of relations with the spectator it imagines, plays and sets as subject in its movement. The process of film is then perfectly available to certain terms of excess – those of that movement in its subject openings, its energetic controls. 'Style' is one area of such controlled excess, as again, more powerfully, are genres in their specific versions of process. The musical is an obvious and extreme example with its systematic 'freedom' of space – crane choreography – and its shifting balances of narrative and spectacle; but an example that should not be allowed to mask the fundamental importance of the experience of process in other genres and in the basic order of classical cinema on which the various genres are grounded. Which is to say, finally, that radical disturbance is not to be linked to the mere autonomisation of a formal element such as camera movement; on the contrary, it can only be effectively grasped as a work that operates at the expense of the classical suppositions of 'form' and 'content' in cinema, posing not autonomies but contradictions in the process of film and its narrative-subject binding.

The construction of space as a term of that binding in classical

98 cinema is its implication for the spectator in the taking place of film as narrative; implication-process of a constant refinding – space regulated, orientated, continued, reconstituted. The use of look and point-of-view structures – exemplarily, the field/reverse field figure (not necessarily dependent, of course, on point-of-view shots)⁶⁶ – is fundamental to this process that has been described in terms of *suture*, a stitching or tying as in the surgical joining of the lips of a wound.⁶⁷ In its movement, its framings, its cuts, its inter-mittences, the film ceaselessly poses an absence, a lack, which is ceaselessly recaptured for – one needs to be able to say ‘forin’ – the film, that process binding the spectator as subject in the realisation of the film’s space.

In psychoanalysis, ‘suture’ refers to the relation of the individual as subject to the chain of its discourse where it figures missing in the guise of a stand-in; the subject is an effect of the signifier in which it is represented, stood in for, taken place (the signifier is the narration of the subject).⁶⁸ Ideological representation turns on – supports itself from – this ‘initial’ production of the subject in the symbolic order (hence the crucial role of psychoanalysis, as prospective science of the construction of the subject, within historical materialism), directs it as a set of images and fixed positions, metonymy stopped into fictions of coherence. What must be emphasised, however, is that stopping – the ‘functioning

66. Salt distinguishes three varieties of field/reverse field and assigns an order and approximate dates for their respective appearances: ‘It is necessary to distinguish between different varieties of angle-reverse-angle cuts; the cut from a watcher to his point of view was the first to appear; the cut from one long shot of a scene to another more or less oppositely angled long shot, which must have happened somewhat later – the first example that can be quoted is in *Roverens Brud* (Viggo Larsen, 1907); and the cut between just-off-the-eye-line angle-reverse-angle shots of two people interacting – the earliest example that can be quoted occurs in *The Loafers* (Essanay, 1911).’ ‘The Early Development of Film Form’, p 98.

67. Cf Jean-Pierre Oudart: ‘La suture’ I and II, *Cahiers du cinéma* 211, April 1969, and 212, May 1969. Oudart’s article was presented in English by Daniel Dayan in ‘The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema’, *Film Quarterly*, Fall 1974, pp 22-31. Criticism of Dayan-Oudart was then offered by William Rothman in ‘Against the System of the Suture’, *Film Quarterly*, Fall 1975, pp 45-50. Discussion can also be found in my ‘On Screen, in Frame: Film and Ideology’, cited earlier, and in Claire Johnston: ‘Towards a Feminist Film Practice’, *Edinburgh Magazine* n 1, 1976, pp 50-59. Space does not permit a detailed ‘account of the accounts’, which is anyway not required in the present context where the notion of ‘suture’ is to be grasped rather within the general lines of the descriptions and arguments here being advanced. With regard to the Dayan-Rothman debate, it must suffice for the moment to let those descriptions and arguments imply certain criticisms of the former shared with the latter but from a different position and with different conclusions.

68. Cf J-A Miller: ‘La suture’, *Cahiers pour l’analyse* 1 (January-February 1966), 3rd edition (with 2), Paris 1975, pp 37-49.

of suture in image, frame, narrative, etc – is exactly a *process*: 99
it counters a productivity, an excess, that it states and restates in the very moment of containing in the interests of coherence – thus the film frame, for example, exceeded from within by the outside it delimits and poses and has ceaselessly to recapture (with post-Quattrocento painting itself, images are multiplied and the conditions are laid for a certain mechanical reproduction that the photograph will fulfil, the multiplication now massive, with image machines a normal appendage of the subject). The process never ends, is always *going on*; the construction-reconstruction has always to be renewed; machines, cinema included, are there for that – and their ideological operation is not only in the images but in the suture.

The film poses an image, not immediate or neutral,⁶⁹ but posed, framed and centred. Perspective system images bind the spectator in place, the suturing central position that is the sense of the image, that sets its scene (in place, the spectator *completes* the image as its subject). Film too, but it also moves in all sorts of ways and directions, flows with energies, is potentially a veritable festival of affects. Placed, that movement is all the value of film in its development and exploitation: reproduction of life and the engagement of the spectator in the process of that reproduction as articulation of coherence. What moves in film, finally, is the spectator, immobile in front of the screen. Film is the regulation of that movement, the individual as subject held in a shifting and placing of desire, energy, contradiction, in a perpetual retotalisation of the imaginary (the set scene of image and subject). This is the investment of film in narrativisation; and crucially for a coherent space, the unity of place for vision.

Once again, however, the investment is in the process. Space comes in place through procedures such as look and point-of-view structures, and the spectator with it as subject in its realisation. A reverse shot folds over the shot it joins and is joined in turn by the reverse it positions; a shot of a person looking is succeeded by a shot of the object looked at which is succeeded in turn by a shot of the person looking to confirm the object as seen; and so on, in a number of multiple imbrications. *Fields* are made, *moving* fields, and the process includes not just the completions but the definitions of absence for completion. The suturing operation is in the process, the give and take of absence and presence, the play of negativity and negation, flow and bind. Narrativisation, with its continuity, closes, and is that movement of closure that shifts the spectator as subject in its terms: the spectator is the *point* of the film's spatial relations – the turn, say, of shot to reverse shot –, their subject-passage (point-of-view organisation,

69. 'Another characteristic of the film image is its neutrality.' *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Macropaedia) Vol 12, Chicago, etc 1974, p 498.

100 moreover, doubles over that passage in its third/first person layerings). Narrativisation is scene and movement, movement and scene, the reconstruction of the subject in the pleasure of that balance (with genres as specific instances of equilibrium) – for homogeneity, containment. What is foreclosed in the process is not its production – often signified as such, from genre instances down to this or that ‘impossible’ shot – but the terms of the unity of that production (narration on narrated, enunciation on enounced), the other scene of its vision of the subject, the outside – heterogeneity, contradiction, history – of its coherent address.

The role of look and point of view for the holding organisation of space has been heavily stressed; the whole weight of the remarks made has been on the image and on the laying out of the images in film. It is important, however, not to overlook in this context the role played by sound. Hence one or two indications here concerning sound and film’s narrative of space, indications all the more necessary in that they bear on the problem of address.

The equivalent of the look in its direction of the image-track is the voice in its direction of the sound-track. Significantly, there is much less play of process practicable with the latter in classical cinema than with the former; the sound-track is hierarchically subservient to the image-track and its pivot is the voice as the presence of character in frame, a supplement to the dramatisation of space, along with accompanying ‘sound effects’. Vertov’s loathed ‘theatrical cinema’ is confirmed in its domination with the arrival of sound and the narrative forms of cinema develop in respect of that theatricality (the truth of the common reference to ‘novels dramatised for the screen’). In fact, the régime of sound as voice in the cinema is that of the ‘safe place’: either in the narrative in its ‘scenes’, as with the normal fiction film, or in the discourse that accompanies the images to declare their meaning, as with the documentary film which remains marginal in commercial cinema. The safe place is carefully preserved in fiction films. Voice and sound are diegetic (with music following the images as an element of dramatic heightening), generally ‘on screen’ but equally defined in their contiguity to the field in frame when ‘off screen’; voice-over is limited to certain conventional uses (as, for example, the direction of memory sequences, a kind of documentary of the past of a life within the film) which effectively forbid any discrepancy – any different activity – between sound and image tracks (Malick is even reputed to have had trouble in getting Holly’s narration in *Badlands* accepted). The stress is everywhere on the unity of sound and image and the voice is the point of that unity: at once subservient to the images and entirely dominant in the dramatic space it opens in them – the film stops when the drama the voices carry in the image ends, when there are no more words, only ‘The End’.

In this context, against that unity, it is worth recalling briefly the insistent emphases of Straub/Huillet in their work on the 'directness' of sound: 'Space-off exists. Which is what one discovers when one shoots with sound and what those who shoot without cannot know. And they are wrong to do so, because they go against the essence of cinema. They have the impression that they are only photographing what they have in front of the camera; but that is not true, one also photographs what one has behind and around the frame.'⁷⁰ Straub/Huillet disrupt by reference to an extreme of 'truth' (often linked, as here, to a Bazin-like reference to 'the essence of cinema'). Dominant and subservient, the voice drama in the fiction film can be dubbed after the shooting, added on to an image track which, as script, it was anyway controlling (in Italy, where Straub/Huillet work, dubbing is standard practice). Neither dominant nor subservient, sound (which includes a veritable work on the grain of the voice itself, the material rhythms of its existence in language – *Othon, History Lessons, Moses and Aaron*) in Straub/Huillet *gives space*, not as coherence but as contradiction, heterogeneity, outside (the extreme of 'truth' thus leading away from Bazin): 'Shooting with direct sound, one cannot cheat with space: one must respect it, and, in respecting it, one offers the spectator the possibility of reconstructing it, because a film is made of "extracts" of time and space. One can also not respect the space one films, but one must then offer the spectator the possibility of understanding why one did not respect it. . . .'⁷¹ It is the coherence of the *fiction* that falls: the fiction film disrespects space in order to construct a unity that will bind spectator and film in its fiction; where a Godard breaks space, fragments and sets up oppositions in the interests of analysis ('analysis with image and sound'), Straub/Huillet film a unity, sound and image, in and off, that will never 'make a scene'; in both cases, the address is complex, in process, no longer the single and central vision but a certain freedom of contradictions.⁷²

What has been described here is the whole context of the

70. 'Entretien avec Jean-Marie Straub et Danièle Huillet', *Cahiers du cinéma* 223, August-September 1970, p 54.

71. 'Sur le son (Entretien avec Jean-Marie Straub et Danièle Huillet)', *Cahiers du cinéma* 260-1, October-November 1975, p 49.

72. No mention has been made in this section of the difficult problem of the verbal organisation of the image according to 'inner speech'; cf Paul Willemsen: 'Reflections on Eikhenbaum's Concept of Internal Speech', *Screen* v 15 n 4, Winter 1974/75, pp 59-70. Worth and Adair note examples of Navajo Indians who judged certain silent films incomprehensible because 'in English', *op cit*, p 130.

102 importance of work and reflection on space in film, the whole context of its actuality; Burch, for instance, as film-maker and theorist, can say that 'we are just beginning to realise that the formal organisation of shot transitions and "matches" in the strict sense of the word is the essential cinematic task'.⁷³ What must now be considered are some of the terms in which that actuality has been articulated and, critically, something of the implications of those terms; the examples will be limited, the final argument more general.

It is hardly necessary to underline the extent to which American independent cinema set about destroying the narrative frame in the interests of the action of the film as flow of images (flashes of movement and energy, sheets of rhythmic multiplicity), the perpetual action of an eye for which every object, in Brakhage's words, is 'a new adventure of perception', an eye in panic and fascination (like that of Hitchcock's Benson in front of the troubling picture). There is a sense of re-doing the history of cinema again, from zero; hence, in part and at the same time, the interest accorded to experimental directions indicated and lost in the early moments of that history (including those of 'cubist cinema'; Benson's painting has its specific resonances here and in the radical separation from Quattrocento space that cubism represents)⁷⁴ or even to the interrogation of its initial productions (as Jacobs explores and extends *Tom, Tom, The Piper's Son*, finding and creating fresh spaces on screen).

Evidently, the practice of American independent cinema is not to be limited to the simple desire for the capture of the present – the presence – of a phenomenologico-romantic visionary consciousness, what P Adams Sitney calls 'the cinematic reproduction of the human mind'. At a time when that cinema already has its own history – from *Meshes of the Afternoon* to *Zorns Lemma*, the field covered by Sitney's book⁷⁵ –, the very problems of screen and frame, movement and framing, and their narrative-spatial determinations are of increasing concern – and this without being reducible to a category of the 'structural film' type. In Frampton's *Poetic Justice*, nothing but a table with a cup of coffee, a cactus, and in the middle, a pile of sheets of paper; silently, the sheets follow one another to the top of the pile and we read – frag-

73. *Theory of Film Practice*, p 11.

74. Cubism as 'construction of deformable and varied worlds, subject to non-Euclidian but extremely topological notions of proximity and separation, succession and surrounding, envelopment and continuity, independently of any fixed schema and of any metrical scale of measurement', Francastel: *Etudes de sociologie de l'art*, p 142; cf, in the same volume, the chapter 'Destruction d'un espace plastique', pp 191-252.

75. *Visionary Film*, New York and London 1974.

ments seized at the whim of the succession – the scenario of a film; a rubber glove rests on the last page. In J J Murphy's *Print Generation*, a sequence of images is passed through a series of 'generations' until it arrives at a printing close to the 'normal' from which it is run back down to the initial state of luminous abstraction. Two quite different films, but both engaging problems of narrative and frame: in the one, the image is fixed in the frame of a written narrative which makes this film which exceeds it, vacillation of reading the film (where is the point of view to be held?), each viewing varied against the fixity of the image (and not more complete); in the other, the film as the action of a technical process, the image narrated, scales of readings in that action (suspense of the point of recognition of the image), the screen in dots, impressions-pulsations of new spaces.

Those examples were minor, cited as such and a little at random. The films of Michael Snow, on the contrary, are a major example, quite different but again finding their particular force in this connection, with respect to space in film. *Wavelength* gives the economy of the formal explorations of the 'structural film' in a radical work on the problems of the spaces of narrative and the narratives of space. The famous forty-five minute zoom constructs the filmed room (the New York loft) into a *crossing*, a time of continuously jerky spaces – the superimposition of fixed images, the unsteadiness of the regulation of the zoom, the human events that arrive in its path. It is a matter of narrating in the time of the film the space covered, of making that crossing of space – with its frames (the play of the windows onto the street, the photograph picked out on the wall, the events themselves – so many quotations of actions, of commonplaces) and its framings (the changing focal length of the zoom) – the scene of a veritably filmic action, a process without any *single* view. In *La Région centrale*, the programme of 360-degree rotations works at the loss of any perspective frame, as a kind of speed-jubilation of a time of space (landscape as movement, movement as landscape), an impossibly uncentred narrative in which the apparatus (the camera), sole 'character' in the film, serves to disjoin the subject-eye, to open between sight and seen, overturning the technological 'yield' of cinema.

What remains is the difficulty of sound as the address of voice. *Rameau's Nephew* by Diderot (thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen is conceived as a 'real "talking picture"' (hence the title, Rameau's nephew as the irruption of the body-voice onto the scene of philosophy) and over its twenty-four sections – so many sketches and gags – explores 'image-sound relationships' in the cinema in a way that often connects with the spatial preoccupations to be found in, say, *Wavelength* and *La Région centrale*. The result is something akin to an indefatigably prolonged version of Godard's *Le Gai Savoir*, but lacking the political insistence of any analysis

104 as text; the film talks, jokes, accumulates, overlays, reverses, confuses and tricks as though empty of any reflexive contradiction. Its work, as it were, fails to *carry*, in the sense in which the crucial filmic-narrative concerns of the previous films might have led one to expect, fails to transform – and to transform politically – the cinematic relations of form and content, and the setting of narrative accordingly.

Burch's arguments in *Theory of Film Practice* come together as a central plea – developed via terms such as 'dialectical', 'organic', 'structural', these terms tending to synonymity – for the poetic function of film, 'conflictual organisation' as 'unity through diversity': 'Although film remains largely an imperfect means of communication, it is nonetheless possible to foresee a time when it will become a totally immanent object whose semantic function will be intimately joined with its plastic function to create a *poetic function*.'⁷⁶ The analysis of spatial tensions and movements is made in this context and *Theory of Film Practice* finally falls within a range of writing on film that would also include, for instance, the work of an Arnheim; Burch introduces structural conflict with dialectical relationship, disorientation with dynamic organicism, the ultimate concern always composition, film as *art*. It is easy enough, moreover, to transpose such a concern, with its brand of phenomenological formalism, into notions of 'deconstruction' as a formal crisis of codes. Indicating the importance of deconstruction in an interview in 1973 ('I should say right now that this concept of deconstruction is something which is quite important to me'), Burch continues: 'Let's leave the word deconstruction for the moment because it's a more modern word than the actual origin of this concept, which can be traced back to the Prague school and to Jakobson and Mukařovský and work in semiotics which involves the concept that there is an aesthetic message (I'm using the word now in the specifically semiotic sense) if you like, produced through the subversion, through the breaking down of, through creating a crisis in what we call the dominant codes of representation in a given medium. This language can be extended to practically anything.'⁷⁷ What is emerging is a potentially critical idea of deconstruction covered by

76. *Theory of Film Practice*, p 12; in her Introduction, Annette Michelson writes: 'his voice puts forth a claim for total structural rigour and authenticity . . .', p xv. It should be noted: firstly, that the remarks made here consider only the implications of Burch's arguments and do not touch on the value of his working out of those arguments; secondly, that Burch himself, in the Preface to the English version (pp xvi-xx), is retrospectively critical of the book, though within limits which actually close the distance asserted and bring the criticism very near to the formulations of the original.

77. 'Beyond *Theory of Film Practice*: an interview with Noel Burch', *Women and Film* 5-6, p 22.

its simple articulation as a poetics, this latter being its history in Burch's work. Thus a description of *Man with a Movie Camera* as deconstruction film will read exactly as a transposition of the definition of the poetic function of film the totally immanent object found in *Theory of Film Practice*, with Jakobson precisely as an underlying presence for both: 'But it was only with Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) that the work of paradigmatic deconstruction of the illusionist codes gave rise to the constitution of a comprehensive dialectic, informing the totality of the work along the syntagmatic axis.'⁷⁸

Something of the problems of a formal idea of deconstruction can be seen in the Thompson-Bordwell and Branigan texts on Ozu. What those texts suggest is a modernity of Ozu's films based on a foregrounding – here too, it is worth noting the reference made to concepts derived from literary Formalism – of space that challenges the supremacy of narrative causality. In fact, there are two components in the argument developed. The first concerns the demonstration of a certain autonomy of space: 'Ozu's films include not only the spaces between points but also spaces *before* and *after* actions occur there . . .'; 'Ozu's cutaways and transitions usually present spaces distinct from the characters' personal projects . . . at the most radical level, in presenting space empty of character – spaces around characters, locales seen before characters arrive or after they leave, or even spaces which they never traverse – Ozu's films displace the illusion of narrative presence and plenitude.'⁷⁹ The second concerns the description of a 360-degree shooting space: 'If Hollywood builds upon spatial patterns bounded by 180 degrees and 30 degrees, Ozu's films use limits of 360 degrees and 90 degrees.'⁸⁰

These two components are related in their demonstration of the importance of space in Ozu but can at the same time be differentiated a little in a way that will help focus the problems of that demonstration. Thus, the analysis of the 360-degree shooting space is very much the analysis of a closed system: 'Ozu's scenic space is systematically built up, modified by subtle repetitions and variations within the limits he has set for himself.'⁸¹ That system is effectively different from that of Hollywood (where 360-degree movements are very conventionally and narratively limited – the slow pan at the beginning of the drive in *Red River*), which it can serve to contrast, but the question of its effective functioning, its

78. Burch and Dana: 'Propositions', p 44. (Jakobson: 'The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection onto the axis of combination.' 'Linguistics and poetics', in *Style in Language* ed T A Sebeok. New York 1960, p 358.)

79. 'Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu', pp 52, 54.

80. *Ibid*, p 58.

81. *Ibid*.

106 critical activity, in the films is not posed. Indeed, certain formulations imply 360-degree space in Ozu as a formal accompaniment to a content that in itself and in its other devices is very close to Hollywood: 'Once this pattern of circular space is established, Ozu's films use the same devices Hollywood does, but without the axis of action.'⁸² The description of the autonomy tends to avoid consideration of its activity outside of formal limits. More radical in a sense is the account of a presence of space based specifically on terms of autonomy, the space that is there, distinct, before and after; this in so far as it suggests an exploration of the tensions between surface and place, screen and frame, economy of the film and economy of narrative. When followed through into the discussion of graphic matches, however, the tensions are once again shown as subdued in a formal independence (near to an art of composition): 'Such graphic play is central to Ozu's modernity because the screen surface itself and the configurations that traverse it are treated as independent of the scenographic space of the narrative.'⁸³ Spatial nuances are set up as graphic matches in the systematic and repetitious space of the films, but what are the critical tensions of this autonomy in the action of the films?

In this respect, the description of the 'most transgressive transition', the baseball-game transition in *An Autumn Afternoon*, is significantly weak: 'Ozu's transition goes first to the place the character is *not*, then to the place where he actually is. This sequence is one of the culminations of Ozu's exercises in moving through spaces between scenes independently of any narrative demands.'⁸⁴ Nothing in the description suggests more than an 'exercise': the transition goes not so much to the place the character is not as to the place *he should have been*, a projected space (Kawai insists that he is going to the game), exactly a simple *place*; certainly there is a play of difficulty in finding the men, but that play – irony and revelation (so Kawai didn't go . . .) – is not transgressive of the terms of the narrative in the terms of the narration it gives. And to pose such a transgressive activity involves an analysis directed not to a unity of dominants and overtones but to the bindings of those terms, to the modes of address of film in its subject-vision relations in narrative-space, to the contradictions they contain.

Frames hit the screen in succession, figures pass across screen through the frames, the camera tracks, pans, reframes, shots

82. Ibid, p 60.

83. Ibid, p 70.

84. Ibid, p 51; full details of the transition can be found on this same page.

replace and – according to the rules – continue one another. Film 107 is the production not just of a negation but equally, simultaneously, of a negativity, the excessive foundation of the process itself, of the very movement of the spectator as subject in the film; which movement is stopped in the negation and its centring positions, the constant phasing in of subject vision ('this but not that' as the sense of the image in flow). Such a negativity is the *disphasure* of the subject in process, the fading, the 'flickering of eclipses' or 'time between' that the classical narrative film seeks to contain in its process, film aiming thus to *entertain* the subject (etymologically, 'entertainment' is a holding-in and a maintenance – the subject occupied in time). Narrativisation is then the term of film's entertaining: process and process contained, subject bound in that process and its directions of meaning. The ideological operation lies in the balance, in the capture and regulation of energy; film circulates – rhythms, spaces, surfaces, moments, multiple intensities of signification – and narrativisation entertains the subject – on screen, in frame – in exact turnings of difference and repetition, semiotic and suture, negativity and negation; in short, the spectator is *moved*, and *related* as subject in the process and images of that movement. The spatial organisation of film as it has been described here in the overall context of its various articulations is crucial to this moving relation, to the whole address of film: film makes space, takes place as narrative, and the subject too, set – sutured – in the conversion of the one to the other.

In his essay on 'Le cinéma et la nouvelle psychologie', already cited above, Merleau-Ponty writes that 'the aspect of the world would be transformed if we succeeded in seeing as *things* the intervals between things'.⁸⁵ The formulation can now be recast: the relations of the subject set by film – its vision, its address – would be radically transformed if the intervals of its production were opened in their negativity, if the fictions of the closure of those intervals were discontinued, found in all the contradictions of their activity. Take the second of the five sections of *Penthesilea* in which Wollen traces a complex itinerary round the sun-and-shadow strewn house, the camera accompanying, leaving, rejoining him, fixing for itself – in its own time – the memory-cards of the discourse he delivers. A certain influence from films of Snow is clear but difficult: a theoretical narrative of the space of the film – Wollen here 'speaks' his and Mulvey's film – within a constant disframing of the time of that narrative, the shifting choreography of discourse to space in the wake of the camera. The camera has an 'autonomy' – dancing high-angle circles round a table-top, for instance – but that autonomy is given in its history: its history in the sequence, where it slips from classical subordination of move-

85. Op cit, p 98.

108 ment to character into a rediscovery of the space of the initial subordination through new variations of movement along its path; its history in cinema, Wollen's discourse involving reflection on film space and spaces; its history in this film, which plays systematically across its sections on movement and fixity, scene and space and distance. The autonomy, moreover, is at every moment taken up elsewhere, divided in its articulations within the political action of the film which is itself, exactly, a series of actions, of histories – the women's struggle, *Penthesilea*, the Amazons, Kleist and psychoanalysis, functions of myth and questions posed to 'feminine' myths, to images and to cinema and to this film with respect to those myths –, that includes the action and the history of the camera spacing as a critical term in its reflection – finding the cards, for example, and indicating the problems of voice and image and movement and their material force: what is a film that speaks, speaks politically? how is the point to be arrived at from which such a question can be formulated in film? Hence, indeed, the importance of the final section of *Penthesilea* with its four screens on screen, the film remembered in their separation and relation and working over, the film repeated differently again in this critical inflection of its present struggle: this woman who now faces the camera with the problem of speech, these images, these words and sounds, this film in the intervals of struggle, with the narrative space of the film extended plurally to a movement of spaces and the contradictions of their intersection. *Penthesilea*, finally, marks a recognition, and across the unity of the conventional opposition in film, that to fight for a revolutionary content is also to fight for a revolution of form but that – in a dialectic which defines the work of a specific signifying practice – the content ceaselessly 'goes beyond' (Marx's insistence at the start of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*) and that a political struggle is to be carried through in the articulations of 'form' and 'content' at every point of that process.

Which is where it becomes possible to say that the narrative space of film is today not simply a theoretical and practical actuality but is a crucial and political avant-garde problem in a way which offers perspectives on the existing terms of that actuality. Deconstruction is quickly the impasse of formal device, an aesthetics of transgression when the need is an activity of transformation, and a politically consequent materialism in film is not to be expressed as veering contact past internal content in order to proceed with 'film as film'⁸⁶ but rather as a work on the

86. 'The structural/materialist film must minimise the content in its over-powering, imagistically seductive sense, in an attempt to get through this miasmic area of "experience" and proceed with film as film. Devices such as loops or seeming loops, as well as a whole series of technical possibilities, can, carefully constructed to operate in the correct manner, serve to veer the point of contact with the

109 constructions and relations of meaning and subject in a specific signifying practice in a given socio-historical situation, a work that is then much less on 'codes' than on the operations of narrativisation. At its most effectively critical, moreover, that work may well bear little resemblance to what in the given situation is officially acknowledged and defined as 'avant-garde'; in particular, and in the context of the whole account offered here of film and space, it may well involve an action at the limits of narrative within the narrative film, at the limits of its fictions of unity.

This, to take an example chosen since Japanese films are often used as a contrasting frame of reference in the formal deconstruction arguments, is the radical importance of several of the films of Oshima Nagisa. The *intensity* of Oshima's work lies in a 'going beyond' of content that constantly breaks available articulations of 'form' and 'content' and poses the film in the hollow of those breaks. The films have an immediate presence of narrative articulation but that presence in each case presents the absence of another film the discourse of which, punctuating this film and its space, finds its determinations, its contradictions, its negativity. Split in the narrativisation, the films are thus out of true with – out of 'the truth' of – any single address: the subject divided in complexes of representation and their contradictory relations.

In *Death by Hanging*, the prisoner refuses to die and the hanging fails: R the Korean (Yun Yun-do), R worker, as the court verdict begins, cannot be hanged again until he is 'conscious', 'himself', fully identical with 'the real R' ('he must realise his guilt is being justly punished'); the officials busy themselves in efforts to restore R, their R, the legal R, and the film builds its immediate narrative round those efforts, organised into sections announced by written titles, stages in the problem of R's identity and identification. At one point, the action leaves the carefully and theatrically structured confines of the execution-chamber and moves outside, still in the interests of the memory of R that must be reawakened in R; the sequence finds shanty town, river bank, station, alley-way, bridge, ice-cream parlour, and school, where the Education Officer (Watanabe Fumio) becomes carried away in his demonstration of the murder of the woman on the roof. One or two remarks must suffice to suggest the difficult space of this sequence.

The first is general: throughout the sequence R is accompanied by a voice, that of the Education Officer who recounts and enacts R's story, where he should be in the space in frame, specifying its place; the Education Officer's voice is literally 'all over the

film past internal content. The content thus serves as a function upon which, time and time again, a film-maker works to bring forth the filmic event.' Peter Gidal: 'Theory and Definition of Structural Materialist Film', *Studio International*, November-December 1975, p 189; reprinted in *Structural Film Anthology*, op cit, p 2.

110 place' – R sits down by the river, the Education Officer joins him to tell what his feelings must have been and must be (since in this acting out R has to be made to coincide exactly with the repeated story); R telephones at the station, the Education Officer, out of frame, calls instructions. Simply, R is never quite there, in the place assigned; the events take place without him and the space-place conversion is troubled in that absence; another film is possible, but only in the hollow of this film, dialectically in its contradiction. R has neither voice nor look: voices are given – that of the Education Officer but also that of the Sister figure (Koyama Akiko) with a direct militant account of R's acts – and R can come to accept (being R for the sake of all Rs, a certain reality in the Sister) and look (into camera, framed in close-up against the Japanese-flag motif at the start of the final – acceptance – section); something remains over, however, something that Oshima's films constantly attempt to articulate as a new content (in Marx's sense of a content that goes beyond) in the exploration of the political relations of the subject and the subjective relations of the political. In that double and simultaneous movement lies a utopianism that is equally constant, the utopianism of another space (remember the utopianism of the perspective system and its centred subject), a radically transformed subjectivity (often formulated by Oshima in terms of the imaginary as in excess of existing definitions of reality and struggle which it sees as both necessary and as alienating in those definitions – the whole play between R and the Sister figure, between the original news story of the Korean, the reactions to the story in contemporary Japan, and Oshima's film). The work of Oshima is political and obliquely political, a return of the one on the other through questions posed to meanings, images, fictions of unity, the questions of subject relations and transformations.

The second remark is particular: a quotation from within the sequence as a kind of coda. R is never quite there, in the place assigned. R is seen coming along the river bank followed by the compact group of uniformed officials, the Education Officer on a bicycle narrating the story, R eventually bringing the group to a halt by sitting down (Stills 14, 15); the Education Officer sits down in his turn by the side of R, the camera having been repositioned to hold the two men in left profile in near shot but still facing in the direction from which the group arrived, R turns to look back over his right shoulder (Still 16); a cat is revealed as the object of R's gaze by a straightforward transition answering to the orientation of space established by that gaze in the previous shot (Still 17); R is now seen from a position behind him and the Education Officer, R continuing to look back (Still 18); the cat (Still 19); R in close-up seen looking, the camera here positioned to his right (Still 20); the cat (Still 21); a long shot from behind the cat which shows the group of officials, the Education Officer's bicycle, R sitting looking and the Education Officer stretched out beside him



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112 in a line across the frame from left to right, with the bridge beyond in the background and the cat in the centre foreground (Still 22); the shots are linked by cuts and the camera is fixed in every shot. The composition is evident, both in frame and in the development of the shots together, the last shot reversing the direction and the positions in frame – note the group of officials – of the first; in three shots, punctuated by the cat shots, the camera moves a half circle round R, enacting a little narrative on its own, and of R on his own, taken away from the Education Officer, more and more distant from the story relayed by his voice until the separation of the close-up. What then breaks the R/cat exchange, gives the distancing of R one more turn and brings it back against the overall space and movement of this sequence within a sequence, is the final long shot: the match of look and object is interrupted by a shot that catches the cat itself as look in another direction; in front of R in frame, with R and along the line of his look, the cat gazes off into camera, to something never seen, abruptly absent. The place of the camera, moreover, is impossible: object of R's gaze, the cat is seen against a little 'wall' of concrete blocks; gazing, the cat is seen free in its space, from behind the blocks which seem to have vanished. In its composed lines – from cat to R, from bicycle wheel to the middle of the bridge – the shot offers a perfect perspective, but a perspective that runs short in the completion it seeks, the scene opened out – intervalled – in its focus of address, a sudden pull to the relations of space, to the elements therein, to the places they take, and for whom (as Oshima's voice over at the close of the film turns its action to the audience – 'and you too, and you too, and you too . . .').

From Benson's painting to this cat, glimpsed by R and pulled out of his gaze, framed elsewhere. Thus pulled, thus framed, the cat says something important that has been the whole insistence here: events take place, a place for some one, and the need is to pose the question of that 'one' and its narrative terms of film space.

Erratum

Screen v 17 n 1, p 64 lines 19-21 should read 'Pompey, as others by lictors, was always preceded by men with sealed envelopes' and neither as given or as miscorrected in *Screen* v 17 n 2, p 7. We apologise to Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet for this persistence in error.

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Anthropology and Film

In July of this year, the National Film Theatre in London presented a season of twelve programmes of film originating in the Museum of Modern Art's Film Department under the title 'Anthropological Cinema'. Implicit in this title is the assumption that 'anthropological film' exists when the objects of two discourses, that of film and that of the discipline of anthropology, coincide. (Emile de Brigard organised the season, and is the author of a history of the anthropological film which is summarised in *Principles of Visual Anthropology* (ed Paul Hockings, Mouton, The Hague, 1975). For him the object of anthropology is man as a species 'working, playing, posturing, dying', and film is a 'tool' to 'reveal truths about the species' which 'enable as many as possible who would not otherwise do so . . . to see newly and richly the range of human behaviours and the variety of our attempts to make sense of them'. In line with these definitions, the season purports to show films of human beings from the entire range of human societies and several of the films are specifically concerned with modern American societies. However, it is striking that the only films which might be described as non-documentary (ie fictional, like Curtis's 1914 *In the Land of the War Canoes*, originally titled *In the Land of the Head Hunters*, on the Kwakiutl, and Flaherty's 1922 *Nanook of the North*, or what the programme calls 'interpretative', like Gardner's 1974 *Rivers of Sand*) concern primitive peoples. In fact, as we shall try to show from the perspective of anthropological theory, the attempt to instate anthropology as the 'science of man' implicitly confirms its status as the 'study of the primitive'.

Anthropology operates as a process of the revelation of rationality by the insertion of elements into their 'context'. In this review we shall try to place anthropology in 'its context'—in other words, to discover how anthropology creates its objects and aims. Anthropology has not created its conditions of existence (it has 'interests' outside itself), but even when it admits these it presents itself as necessarily bound to a given real object (an

114 area of reality or study). Critiques *within* anthropology have generally explained these interests by the assertion that colonialism has been predominant in structuring anthropological inquiry (cf T Assad, ed: *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, Ithaca Press, London 1973). However, rather than viewing anthropology as 'deformed' by or the 'handmaiden' of colonialism, we want to show that the terms of its discourse arise from the space opened up for it within the ideological field of nineteenth-century England.

This space was created by the extension of zoology (to include man, who becomes 'the human species') and the concomitant demise of theological explanations of man's place in nature. Anthropology thus had a double reference, feeding off and transforming scientific concepts in order to maintain the privileged position of man which science had destroyed. Darwin's concept of 'natural selection' was transformed into the *principle* of the 'survival of the fittest', and the notion of a 'species' into a unitary subject (eg a society or individual) containing this principle (cf Paul Q Hirst: *Social Evolution and Sociological Categories*, George Allen and Unwin 1976, pp 15-26). Applied to society, this became a justification both for racialism and for laissez-faire capitalism (indicating that the notion of 'universality' which anthropology applies to man is a complex and divided one), but its theoretical effects were to install an essentialist totality ('the social system') and a teleology. In evolutionist anthropology, the notion of 'adaptation' allowed the 'savage' an immanent rationality which was to find its ultimate realisation at the end of evolutionary development; hence Frazer's 'bastard science' as a definition of magic. In functionalism, the adaptation of elements to their (pre-given) environment guaranteed both their immediate rationality and their reproduction and maintenance ('homeostasis'). These notions made the social a self-sufficient entity, a totality containing all its conditions of existence, and thus needing no explanation. At the same time, the diversity of cultures revealed man as a creature of 'possibilities', as one who adapts to the social, *his* 'environment', as one who can transcend himself, as the bearer of cultures and as a single species. Man thus occupied the space given to him by this teleological totality (just as vitalism, in its insistence that 'life' is a property of whole organisms, defines a place for God in the space in which the whole is 'more than' its parts), and simultaneously elements of the social could only be 'revealed' by anthropology in a form in which they were controllable by man, precisely the forms in which the social is represented in ideology.

The moment of revelation is the moment of recognition in the anthropological inquiry, the moment when things suddenly 'fall into place'. The anthropologist 'loses himself' and 'finds himself' again (as human) in the confirmation of the rationality of the other. As a structure of representation, anthropology thus defines

a place for the anthropologist in which he is given the task of 'discovering' ('uncovering') the rationality and coherence of its object. If, as Stephen Heath has argued (*Screen* v 15 n 2, Summer 1974), representation is a structure of fetishism, a disavowal of difference, then fetishism is expressed in anthropology as a teleology integral to its very construction. The primitive is the privileged object precisely of the anthropology that disavows his or her difference in the concept of universal man, embracing object and subject of the anthropological inquiry. However, this 'position' given to the anthropologist is not just a geometrical location, it is a dynamically determined outcome which requires *work* of him, precisely the experience of 'field-work'. In field-work, the collection of information is a progression from obscurity ('non-communication', 'ignorance') to clarity ('communication', 'knowledge'). A Westerner is cast adrift amongst exotic and unfamiliar peoples; 'knowing' his *own* society he is necessarily 'deceived' by the alien, but his training allows him eventually to present data which renders their exotic practices rational, the key to this rationality lying in the 'context' of the social. Thus in the end the rationality has to be demonstrated by anthropological theory, revealing the gap between 'anthropology' as a structure of representation and that object (the social) which it claims to reflect.

The notion of 'anthropological cinema' thus raises problems of the relations between the structure of representation implicit in the anthropological project and those structures implicit (but contested) in films. Only if anthropology's attempts to deny its theory (functionalism seen as 'merely a heuristic', structuralism as a 'theory of superstructures') and a naive conception of film as a neutral record are both accepted can the simple conjunction of primitive and film be seen as constituting an unproblematic 'anthropological cinema'. Such is the strength of these notions, however, that they are reproduced in many of the papers presented at the 'Principles of Visual Anthropology' Conference in Chicago in 1973 and published in the volume with the same title referred to above. Thus Margaret Mead's introduction, 'Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words', discusses the need to eliminate 'the hazards of bias' and advocates techniques designed to ensure the absolute neutrality of the camera: 'The camera that stays in one spot, that is not turned, wound, refocussed or visibly loaded does become part of the background scene - what it records did happen.' Elsewhere in the collection, Temaner and Quinn write of techniques they have used to familiarise the subjects with the idea of being filmed while making a documentary about an old folk's home; techniques to ensure that their behaviour in front of the camera is as 'natural' as possible. But using film as a 'note-taking tool' in this way is an attempt to elide the gap noted above between anthropology and its object, the social. The subject matter

116 of the anthropological film all too easily comes to resemble the savages in such movies as *Sanders of the River*, *Tarzan and the Apes* or, more recently, *Valley Obscured by Clouds*, who function as a threat to the white man's identity, either as part of a hostile environment or as the 'noble savage' calling into question the values of a civilised society.

Principles of Visual Anthropology does contain articles critical of this conception of an observational cinema in which the camera, invisible and omniscient, is endowed with the power to witness the totality of an event. In his paper, 'Beyond Observational Cinema', David MacDougall attacks it as an affirmation of the 'colonial origins' of anthropology, since the observer, in denying his own presence, denies the native access to the world of the film which inevitably becomes a monologue, locking us, as viewers, 'into a single argument', a neutral and passive role. In the project of an observational cinema, the anthropologist sets out to rob the native of part of his humanity – 'in denying a part of his own humanity, he denies a part of theirs' – but this project is impossible, because 'no ethnographic film is merely a record of another society, it is always a record of the meeting between a film-maker and that society'. He suggests instead a 'participatory cinema', bearing witness to the 'event' of the film and the reality of the encounter. MacDougall also argues that to demonstrate the context of the film's production will break the passivity of its audience, the passivity in which 'a sense of immediacy is combined with an absolute separation', and create instead 'an altogether different psychic state'. We cannot do justice to MacDougall's argument here, but believe it important to emphasise that it reveals his containment within anthropological discourse and his interest in preserving the anthropological endeavour. Observational cinema is characterised as presenting 'an illusion of reality', leaving unexamined the reality of the illusion and necessitating a theory of ideology as misrepresentation of the real. Ultimately this can only reproduce the forms of anthropological revelation and representation which locate knowledge of the real in the real itself, so that the task of 'participatory cinema' becomes to 'peel back the layers of a culture and reveal its fundamental assumptions'. We would argue, on the contrary, that anthropology itself defines the positions of 'observer' and 'humanity' and is an essentially liberal practice, given the task of 'saving' the primitive and rescuing man as the foundation of the social. This structure of representation and discourse cannot be reduced to a result of the colonial encounter and its creation of the 'isolable primitive society'.

In fact, MacDougall's project does not take us beyond a variant of what Colin McCabe calls the 'classic realist text' (*Screen* v 15 n 2, Summer 1974). The specificity of this variant should not, for all that, be overlooked. The metalanguage which enables the

spectators of both 'observational' and 'participatory' films to advance towards knowledge (the rationality of the real) through the articulation of the other discourses in the text is not, as in MacCabe's examples, the narrative, but the anthropological discourse. Thus in the most fictional film of the season, *In the Land of the Head Hunters*, the narrative does not occupy a position of knowledge which reveals the truth about the events of the film – rather, the events of the film reveal the truth of the narrative as an expression of human nature, while the narrative can appropriate these events only because they are revealed by anthropology as the products of the primitive. The narrative relies on anthropological discourses as a precondition of its function in the film. Thus any simple notion of the universality of man (the narrative seen to reveal the truth of 'human nature') is inadequate to deal with anthropology's representation of the *primitive*. As Napoleon Chagnon says, 'when we look at the Yanomamō we see ourselves, *several times removed*, but ourselves nonetheless' (our emphasis). *Rivers of Sand* presents us with the same problems: the structure of the film shows remarkable parallels to that of *Klute* in MacCabe's reading, in the way in which the subjective discourse of the central female figure is measured against the 'reality' of the images presented. Her complaints about the physical and psychical abuse suffered by women in Hamar society are finally exposed as an illusion and at the end of the film she is also seen as being nearer to the truth than she was at the beginning: 'In the end you stay on, and when you are reconciled your husband will leave you alone.' But once again the narrative is not adequate to guarantee the rationality of the image. The events of the film continually attempt to break the constraints of the narrative so that images, eg of bodily mutilations or animal sacrifice, threaten to displace the position of dominance given to the spectator. But the commentary (which superficially adds nothing more to the understanding than is supplied by the native woman) functions to transfer the value of the images from narrative to anthropology, and through this work to remove their potential threat.

The metalanguage of anthropological theory, operating this time without the collusion of narrative and in a sense outside the realm of the film image, can be seen in Timothy Asch's strategy in filming the Yanomamō (a warlike Amazonian people). These films are sound-synched, free of narration and with very little editing, focussing on one critical event such as an axe-fight, or a feast. Asch sees them as functioning only within the context of academic study. They are made for students in order to give them second-hand experience of the field-work encounter, *after* having studied 'relevant written material'. Asch argues against showing his films to audiences for whom the rationality of bizarre practices has not been demonstrated in advance, fearing that 'this is how stereotypes can be confirmed'. As he points out (simultaneously exposing

118 the liberal purpose of anthropology and its kinship to racialism), 'viewers who rarely have been exposed to behaviour that falls so entirely outside their experience will have difficulty in interpreting it as human'.

Paradoxically, the purpose of anthropology, to save the primitive as a meaningful object of study, is most clearly revealed in those films made by non-anthropologists. The rejection (as a confidence trick) by many members of the NFT audience of films made by Navajo as part of the 'Navajo Film Themselves' project shows that they could not be accommodated as 'meaningful' or 'interesting'. They can be rescued by anthropology only by reducing the techniques of the films to expressions of cultural ideas and practices. This is the purpose of Worth and Adair's book *Through Navajo Eyes*. Significantly, it is precisely in the choice of subjects and the use of techniques alien to the classic documentary (such as avoidance of close-ups, use of jump-cuts, importance of journeys serving no narrative function, etc) that Worth and Adair see the 'truest' reflections of Navajo perceptions of reality. It would appear from this that the preconditions for the coherence of these films lie outside them, as with the other types of anthropological film. This difference from the traditional fiction film has at least one important consequence: no purely filmic strategy could break with the structure without transforming the anthropology which determines it.

MICK EATON
IVAN WARD

Personal Views

One of the contradictions of British film culture is that under normal circumstances the work of Robin Wood would and should be given support. Intelligence and a commitment to film are singularly lacking in the culture as a whole, and these characteristics of Wood's criticism are to be valued and respected. The recent publication of his book, *Personal Views* (Gordon Fraser, 1976), together with the accompanying series of screenings and seminars at the National Film Theatre confirm this view, but also constitute a specific intervention vis-à-vis *Screen* that focusses the other edge of the contradiction. For Wood's position is ultimately and fundamentally one which is antagonistic to and incompatible with the kind of work that *Screen* is engaged in. Hence it calls for comment and counter-statement.

Wood's problematic is that of the Leavisian inflection of liberal humanism. As such it is marked by what Terry Eagleton has pointed to as the central contradiction of the literary magazine *Scrutiny*: that between its role as vanguard and its role as elite,

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on the one hand in conflict with the literary establishment, on the other disseminating standards from within it (see Terry Eagleton, 'Raymond Williams, An Appraisal', *New Left Review* n 95, January-February 1976). That contradiction and its effects pervade Wood's book, with its insistence on a distance from the critical establishment and the latter's dilettantism, but also on 'discrimination' in the interests of 'civilisation' and 'tradition'; a radicalism of commitment accompanying a conservatism of cultural attitude. Hence Wood's profoundly equivocal attitude to capitalism and the possibility of its transformation:

'Capitalism, with its combination of injustice and inefficiency, could only seem desirable as the least of possible evils. . . . I believe that revolution may come, and there are many compelling reasons for welcoming it. I see my role, however . . . as existing outside the revolution; my work as an attempt to uphold values widely regarded as irrelevant or retrograde' (*Personal Views*, p 75).

This inability to achieve a genuine social radicalism stems, then, from the contradictions and limitations inherent in Wood's problematic: social radicalism would require thinking society as a whole and thus the exposure of the very complicity from which the problematic stems. Instead the focus is always on the category of the individual, be it the individual artist, the individual work, or the individual viewer/reader/critic, a focus whose naked statement reads as the most traditional and conservative defence of capitalism:

'I set supreme value on the quality – and individuality – of the individual life, cannot contemplate favourably any form of social organisation that does not have the preservation and development of individuality as its end' (p 55).

This category of the individual alone can bear a (constantly reiterated) notion of wholeness and totality: the rest is 'chronic uncertainty' and 'provisional judgement', flux and chaos.

It is not only the social whole that is incapable of theorisation. This is merely the central symptom of an ideology marked by a fundamental irrationality in that it posits as ultimate value and object that which it deems to be inherently incapable of systematic thought. It is not even the work of art that is the object of scrutiny, since art works are subject to investigation through an examination of aesthetic systems. It is rather the *experience* of the work of art: 'The true end of criticism is evaluation, the evaluation of the total experience the work is felt by the critic to offer' (p 12). Hence Wood's insistence on the separate roles of theory and criticism, and the grounds of that insistence:

'I am a critic, not a theorist. I believe that criticism and theory are two separate disciplines, partly overlapping, each capable of

120 drawing sustenance from the other, but also partly incompatible. The theorist erects systems, the critic explores works. For the theorist, questions of value will be determined by reference to a previously elaborated system; for the critic, a sense of values arises from placing this experience beside that experience in an endless and flexible empiricism ' (p 10).

A starting point for the demonstration of the ultimate incompatibility between *Screen's* work and that of Wood can be found here. For *Screen* sees theory not as a system for providing *values*, but as a system for providing *knowledge*, ie a body of concepts whose importance lies in producing a form of understanding that does not entail a necessary dependence on institutionalised authority, be it that of the critic or teacher, but rather provides, through its system of conceptual elaboration and definition and its procedures of application and testing, a potential alternative to that authority. *Screen's* theoretical work is aimed at constructing a rigorous and systematic understanding of the cinema that comprehends its determinations and effects within and across social structures and institutions. Fundamental to that work is the view that an empiricism such as Wood's, taking the individual and his or her 'experience' as its founding point, is an inadequate basis in that it is incapable of thinking the role of social formations in the very construction of individuals and their experience. It can only, at best, assume it. If it is recognised that there is no individuality or experience except in and through the mediation of social relations and their various structures, it becomes crucially important to be able to think and understand those relations and structures and their various articulations in distinct social formations.

From here stem several lines of inquiry: into the problem of meaning and its production and construction within filmic texts; into the problem of the positions vis-à-vis meanings offered by different modes of production and construction and finally into the problem of the status and effects of film as both meaningful object and saleable commodity. All of these are based on the recognition that critical discourses construct rather than reflect their objects of scrutiny in ways which have consequences for the possibilities of transforming existing social relations and all of which comprehend the necessity for the reconstruction of their object such that those consequences are constantly in view.

Because Wood's ideology of art is marked by a refusal of conceptual systematisation, it is blind to its own processes of construction and their social determinants and effects. Taking as unproblematically given his two central terms and moments, art and the human, Wood can meet evidence of the reconstruction of those terms elsewhere only with a protestation that they are being destroyed once and for all. On the contrary, they are being

re-thought. That re-thinking has, of necessity, meant a reorganisation of previously given definitions, hierarchies and priorities. Wood's critique of work associated with *Screen* (though by no means confined to it) centres on a number of positions and theoretical strategies engendered by this process of reconstruction and reorganisation, these being primarily positions on authorship and the methodology of auteur structuralism and positions on realism with particular regard to concomitant positions on Brecht and Godard.

Wood holds that authorship is necessary as a means of assessing worth: 'It still seems to me true that the director is the decisive determinant of the *quality* of the vast majority of films' (p 174, my emphasis). The value of auteur criticism has always been its emphasis on meaning and its determination within and across a series of films, in other words its contribution to a general understanding and knowledge of the cinema. However, that emphasis is constantly vitiated by its collapsing of a number of distinct problems and areas for investigation onto a notion of individual creativity that not only precludes thinking the role and determination of the social but also confuses several distinct instances of subjectivity that require careful distinction: 1, the empirical, interviewable individual who directs films; 2, the subject of narration and point of view in any particular film; 3, the subject of the message(s) in any particular film; 4, the subject of narration and point of view across a series of films; and 5, the subject of a structure of messages and meanings, again across a series of films. The use of the concept of 'subject' in 2-5 implies the necessity of thinking about the instance of the reader/viewer as well as of the author. Auteur structuralism was a first step in systematically thinking the fifth of these points, and in so doing made the crucial distinction between the empirical director and the subject of a set of semantic structures. Its inadequacies are by now well-documented. Wood's demonstration of some of them, though in many ways correct and thought-provoking, is not, however, handled in such a way that positive impetus for further theoretical development is provided. Instead they are juxtaposed with an assertion of 'individual creativity' whose central term – 'genius' – in fact *explains* nothing and merely acts to conflate prematurely those distinctions in the instances of subjectivity pointed to above.

As regards realism, a refusal to accept as unproblematic assertions that it is characterised by 'representation' and 'narrative' and as such 'has been dominant in all ages' (p 79) has led to careful scrutiny of these basic terms in a process of re-thinking modes of representation and narrative that seeks to recognise the specificity of the particular mode developed in the nineteenth-century novel and sustained in the dominant cinema of the twentieth. This specificity has been seen as lying, not in a supposed

122 relation of adequation to an assumed reality, nor even in the maintenance of its conventions of credibility and understanding (since most forms of art do that), but rather in a particular system of articulation of point of view and hierarchisation of discourse, the effect of which is the construction of a space of reading which tends to guarantee a unity of subjectivity outside social division and contradiction. Thus, if realism offers knowledge, it is knowledge of a particular kind, one which closes off rather than opening up the thinking and recognition of that division and contradiction. This theory is reinforced by the tendency of critical ideologies which take this mode of realism as their prime object and standard to do the same. Thus Wood's statement that 'the reason why representational or narrative art has been dominant in all ages is simple: it makes possible a human richness – an appeal from human beings, to human beings, about human beings' (p 79), operates precisely to displace the possibility of knowledge of social contradiction and division by assuming a unified and unifying essence of 'the human' outside social and historical construction and definition. By recognising the specificities of certain forms subsumed by the blanket term 'realism', and their social effects, alternatives are also recognised in which procedures of narration structure subject positions as points of social division and contradiction rather than as points of transcendental unity. It is in this light that the work of Brecht and Godard is seen as of interest. Disagreements with Wood's position thus hinge on two crucial points: the status and aim of knowledge and its social determinants and effects. To argue that Wood's problematic is limited in its potential to generate the kind of knowledge that *Screen* is trying to produce is not to argue that his work is without considerable insight and intelligence. His very empiricism leaves him open to new developments. His radical commitment to certain values entails a particular interest in ideas that emphasise the role of society in producing and reading films, and coupled with the virtues of the Leavisian emphasis on close and detailed attention to texts, this has in his most recent work resulted in a particularly interesting critical method. It is, however, to argue that this interest and its potentialities are constantly vitiated by the basic project: the self-cultivation of the individual.

STEVE NEALE

The Future of the French Film Industry

Much has happened to the French film industry since the heady days of 1968 when, in the space of two weeks, the Estates General, motivated more by radicalism and idealism than by theoretical analysis, proposed nineteen projects designed both to criticise and

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to transform French cinema (the most popular of those projects were printed in *Cahiers du Cinéma* n 203, August 1968 and reprinted in English in *Screen* v 13 n 4, Winter 1972/3, pp 61-88). Since that time, little theoretical work has been done by the left wing in France on the structure of the industry and therefore the recent publication in Paris of *Cinéma, Culture ou Profit?* 'by a group of Communist film-makers' (Editions de la Nouvelle Critique, 15 F) is a welcome contribution to the ongoing theoretical debate on the nature and scope of the structural reforms needed in order to promote and sustain a radical cinema in France.

For readers of *Screen*, an analysis of the problems of the French film industry is important because it demonstrates how arguments about capital, power and accountability cannot be reduced to simple chauvinistic assertions about national culture as they were in the recent report of Harold Wilson's Working Party on *The Future of the British Film Industry* (see *Screen* v 17 n 1, Spring 1976, pp 84-93). France, like the United Kingdom, is a member state of the European Community, throughout which cinema audiences have declined with the growth of television and indigenous film production faces severe, if not crippling, competition from US-based distributors and sources of production finance. To this extent the problems of the French film industry are similar to those of Great Britain. There are also, however, very real differences, particularly in the structures and philosophies of their television industries, and the provisions their governments make for selective aid to new and experimental film production, over and above the obvious differences in recent film and other culture.

The first two chapters of *Cinéma, Culture ou Profit?* explore problems which are common to most of the film producing countries of Europe; the extent and nature of the decline in cinema audiences and the poverty and insecurity of film technicians, actors and directors which lie behind the façades of glamour and creative freedom promoted by the media industries themselves for their own capitalist purposes. In contrast, Chapter Three explores the shifts in power and the resultant cultural and ideological thrusts brought about by the recent reorganisation of French television, when ORTF was broken up to make way for three separate television distribution channels and a State-owned production company, la Société Française de Production et de Création Audio-visuelle (SFP). The final chapter offers some perspectives for future change.

The existence in France of a relative abundance of public opinion surveys on cinema-going permits the authors to demonstrate beyond doubt that the decline in cinema audiences is not only numerical but also represents a shift in the class structure of the audience. Predominantly working-class audiences have given way to urban middle-class and intellectual audiences. There results what the authors see as cultural progress, the success on the

124 major circuits of films by Buñuel, Fellini, Bergman, Visconti, Losey and Antonioni (p 15). The majority of the members of the audiences questioned in a survey carried out in 1970 by the Institut Français d'Opinion Publique for the Centre National de la Cinématographie would have liked to have gone to the cinema more often but found it too expensive (p 13), while the cinemas themselves were situated in city centres well away from working-class areas, small towns and the countryside. Thus in 1973, 80.1 per cent of Parisian cinema receipts came from first-run cinemas with an average seat price of 9.52F, compared with an average seat price of 5.21F in the remaining 19.9 per cent (p 10). This and other evidence leads the authors to propose a strategy which builds on this new public of the middle classes, the intellectuals and the politically conscious fringe, but in such a way as to promote cultural rather than economic separatism, so that, as Brecht recommended, a small circle of connoisseurs may be transformed into a large circle of connoisseurs (pp 29-31). Unfortunately, this glosses over the fact that for Brecht, the extension of connoisseurship implied also a transformation of that connoisseurship (from taste to knowledge), and hence necessarily of its objects, in this case films. Are the interests of workers best served by making it possible for them to see more Buñuel, Fellini, Bergman, etc? On this the authors have nothing to say.

This crucial ambiguity apart, the long-term aim is clear. What is less clear is the route by which it is to be achieved. The obscurity can ultimately be traced back to two main causes. First, the decision to analyse the future of the film industry without fully analysing the future of television. Second, and more fundamental, the failure to set the debate within the context of the arguments surrounding 'the historic compromise' which are currently going on within all the Communist Parties of Western Europe, including the PCF.

In Chapter Three, the authors show that the relationship between the cinema and the television industries in France was radically changed when ORTF was abolished in 1974. Not only was a public-sector monopoly organisation replaced by three competing channels, but, more significantly, production was separated from transmission and distribution. By preventing the new television channels, TF1, A2 and FR3, from embarking on a substantial production programme, and by ensuring that in the first years of their existence most of their programmes were commissioned from the state-owned production company SFP, the Government has achieved two aims. First, it has forged a large semi-autonomous production unit which will produce films for both cinema and television release, thus unifying the two media. Second, it has made sure that this unifying force responds to the forces, and thus the ideology, of international capitalism. This essentially reactionary direction of the reorganisation of French television leads the authors to the

position that the cinema and television are essentially complementary, rather than homogeneous, and that the social uses of the two media, their technical infrastructure and their economic base entail differing aesthetic requirements over and above the audio-visual characteristics which they have in common (p 69). While this may be so, the complementary natures of film and television do not remain fixed. It is more accurate to say that they are interdependent, one medium responding to social needs which remain unsatisfied by other media. Thus if, as the authors say in an aside, radio and television are to be reorganised to make them more democratic, taking into account their diverse social functions and educational role (p 95), this will have a further effect on the needs of potential cinema audiences.

Thus the authors have devised a strategy which is based on market data obtained before 1974 when ORTF was still in existence; they will need to implement its initial stages within the context of the current structure of French TV; and they will, at almost the same time, reorganise French broadcasting so that it assumes yet a third relationship with the cinema and with the public.

This lack of precision in analysing the relationship between cinema and television also extends to the authors' analysis of the political and economic contexts in which their proposals for reform are to be implemented. Thus, although the main intention of their proposals is to emphasise and promote the cultural functions of the cinema in place of its profit-making function, nowhere do the authors explore and analyse the implicit contradictions between a national French policy which promotes culture and the policy of the European Economic Community which promotes the economic aspects of cinema. This was made clear by the European Court of Justice in its recent judgement concerning cable television in Italy when it noted that the Commission had defined the industry by applying Article 62 of the Rome Treaty, which is the article concerned with the supplies of services, and that the cinema was 'in essence a matter of exploiting commercial protection rights'.

The contradictions between national cultural aspirations and Community policy in the field of the cinema give but one concrete example of the significance of the theoretical debates now taking place within the PCF as to the merit or otherwise of maintaining the dictatorship of the proletariat as part of the Party programme. The authors of *Cinéma, Culture ou Profit?* are ambivalent about their own position. Their proposals are based primarily on the Common Programme of Government of France's Parties of the Left, but they are also concerned to extend and go beyond this, arguing for a complete cultural revolution which can only be achieved through socialism and that the Common Programme is merely the key to achieving a much wider socialisation of the means of production (p 96). Those proposals which the authors see as arising from the Common Programme are essentially con-

126 cerned to emphasise the *economic* benefits accruing to the cinema. Thus by improving the quality of life of the working classes, by providing urban accommodation and transport and by improving working conditions and shortening the working week, the leisure opportunities of the working class will be increased permitting them to visit the cinema more often. The reduction of the rate of VAT on cinemas to 7.5 per cent, a subsidy of 20 per cent from the State towards the film industry's Aid Fund, aid for the small exhibitor to modernise his cinema, a policy of building new cinemas in cinematically deprived areas and the maintenance and development of technical infrastructures (studios, support services, etc) which can be placed at the disposal of creative personnel are all measures which support indiscriminately both the reactionary and the progressive forces in the industry. They are measures which favour the cinema industry at the expense of other sectors of the economy. The proposals to double the Cultural Affairs share to 1 per cent of the national budget and for aid for the distribution of 'quality films' certainly provide the opportunity to support and encourage progressive film-makers, but the scale will still be very limited. Thus in 1973, the last year for which complete figures are available, less than 4 per cent of money invested from French sources came from the selective 'advances against receipts' funded by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and when set against the total investment in French films from all sources, the figure falls to some 2.5 per cent.

Once the authors' proposals start to extend beyond the Common Programme they become much more vague and problematic. The proposal to reintegrate the public sector will certainly provide a way of making inroads into the market domination of other major groups and of the American distributors in particular, but it also brings its disadvantages. Such a vertically integrated public sector would need to ensure adequate finance, probably limited to the revenues from its cinemas in France, for a regular supply of progressive feature films, since there would be no guarantee that other distributors would be prepared to offer its cinemas anything other than poor-quality, second-rate films unwanted by other exhibitors. Secondly, a group of such a size, whether publicly or privately owned, would be forced to trade in the international market, and thus be responsive to all the pressures which that implies.

Thus, while it is possible for small scale interventions on behalf of culture to be maintained on a national scale, when the interventions are made on a substantial scale they take on an international perspective. And so, inevitably, the role of the Common Market is brought into the foreground of the debate. Community policy encourages those films which are profitable and marketable internationally. Furthermore, its film directives now in force prohibit restrictions of inter-state trade (63/607), prohibit selective aid for specialist cinemas and prohibit national screen quotas

(65/264), prohibit restrictions on the freedom of establishment of film distributors (68/369) and of film producers (70/451). Thus policies which attempt to promote national cultures within the Community must also be non-restrictive, promoting and supporting the cultural rather than restricting the profitable. Although attempting to work within this framework, the authors of *Cinéma, Culture ou Profit?* have not been entirely successful in producing a policy which will achieve their aims. Their economic support of non-commercial areas of film culture remains limited and they give no consideration either to the needs of the international film market or to the impact of foreign films on their own market. Two questions therefore remain to be answered before a healthy future can be assured for the cinema. First, is any cultural future possible for a film industry which attempts to operate within the framework of the European Community? Second, if such a future is possible, should the progressive forces of Europe operate within a national context or in a Community-wide alliance?

VINCENT PORTER

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